

STARTING IN THE INDEPENDENT THIS SATURDAY
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THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 1998

(1R50p) 45p

INSIDE TODAY'S BROADSHEET REVIEW

EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT



Back to school after the carnage



The verdict on Spielberg's Private Ryan



Does your child read enough?

Blair faces defeat by left rebels

BY ANDREW GRICE AND PAUL WAUGH

TONY BLAIR is heading for an embarrassing defeat at Labour's annual conference later this month, with left-wingers set for victory in elections to the party's national executive committee.

Figures compiled at Labour's Millbank headquarters suggest that left-wingers will capture four of the six seats representing constituency parties on the NEC, with Blair loyalists winning just two.

Those set to win election include Liz Davies, the former Islington councillor vetoed by the Labour leadership as the party's general election candidate in Leeds North East because of her hard-left views.

The looming south to Mr Blair emerged as Tom Sawyer, Labour's general secretary, appealed to the Prime Minister to tackle, in his keynote speech to the Blackpool conference, the perception he has become "a bit detached" from his own party.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Mr Sawyer urged the Labour leader to answer allegations of "cronyism" by rejecting claims by the former lobbyist Derek Draper that there were "17 people who count" in the Government, including several of Mr Blair's backroom advisers.

Mr Sawyer said Labour members "want to be reassured that the most important people in the party are its elected representatives, its MPs, members of the Cabinet, people who the rank-and-file members put their trust in to work with Tony Blair and support Tony Blair". And he added: "They don't want to see a broad

INSIDE

Tom Sawyer interview, page 8;
David Aaronovitch, Review, page 3

range of hangers-on who it is alleged have more influence than the elected representatives."

Labour sources say many of the party's 385,000 members are reluctant to support all the candidates running on a pro-Blair ticket in the NEC elections. They do not believe the Prime Minister should have a monopoly on the party's ruling body and want to elect "some people with different views".

Some insiders believe that the leadership, which has launched repeated attacks on the left-wing candidates, has made a tactical mistake by turning the NEC elections into a "trial of strength" that Mr Blair cannot win.

According to estimates by officials at Labour headquarters, left-wingers are set to top the poll. In first place at present is Mark Seddon, editor of *Tribune* newspaper, with Cathy Jamieson, a left-wing member of Labour's Scottish executive, running second. Also on course for election are Ms Davies and Pete Willsman, both put forward by the Centre-Left Grassroots Alliance.

The only two candidates running on the Blairite Members' First ticket who look likely to win are Michael Cashman, the actor and gay rights campaigner, and Diana Jouda, an official with the shopworkers' union Usdaw, who has served on the NEC for 11 years.

Mr Blair's allies admit privately they are gloomy about

the moderates' prospects. Supporters say they are meeting strong resistance when they appeal to members to "vote for Tony Blair". One admitted: "They don't see what's wrong with letting democracy take its course and why he always wants to have it all his own way."

In a speech last night, Mr Blair insisted that "a strong party is essential to a strong government". And he told critics that his reforms to the party's policy-making machinery would "forever slay the dragon of Labour disunity".

But the Prime Minister is facing another setback today, with a warning of the likelihood of industrial unrest this winter. John Edmonds, leader of the GMB general union and this year's TUC president, says the clampdown on public-sector pay is "hurting people" and warns that strike action would make a mess of the aim for high-quality education and other services.

He told *New Statesman* magazine: "It really does look as if we are heading towards big trouble and it's going to be very disruptive for everybody. We are not looking for a fight, but the members feel they are being pushed into a corner."

Mr Edmonds praised Mr Blair and Peter Mandelson, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, but criticised Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and his spin doctors. "We have had a problem with Gordon. Every time he has met us, we've suffered from an extended spinning period in advance when the world at large has been told that what we were going to say to him was rubbish," Mr Edmonds said.



A Manchester United poster with 'heart' changed to 'heartless' of England, evokes support from a disgruntled fan

Martin Rickett

Inquiry may stall Murdoch bid

BY PETER THAL LARSEN AND STEVE BOGGAN

RUPERT MURDOCH'S £224m takeover of Manchester United is likely to face a series of investigations which could delay the sale for up to a year.

City analysts believe, the mass protests of United fans, coupled with objections from other media and sporting companies, will make it inevitable that the Office of Fair Trading will recommend a monopolies investigation into the world's biggest-ever sports deal.

This puts Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, on the spot because he will have to decide whether to accept any OFT recommendation to refer.

He is a close friend of Mr Murdoch's daughter, Elisabeth, general manager of BSkyB. And Mr Mandelson, Tony Blair and other senior Labour figures, spent years wooing the media tycoon to support the party.



In the City, analysts said the pressure on the Trade and Industry Secretary would be irresistible. Tom Usher, an expert in competition law at S. J. Berwin, said: "The OFT is looking at what is best for the consumer and they will have a significant body of complaint. My view is that it is more likely than not to be referred."

The last time Mr Murdoch faced the threat of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation, in the early Eighties over his takeover of

Times Newspapers, the then Conservative government decided against a referral.

Confirmation of the takeover sent United shares soaring to 221p on the London stock market, up from an opening price of 200p. At the close of business, however, they settled at 215p, still below the offer price of about 240p, following concerns about an MMC referral.

A DTI spokesman said the takeover would be considered by the Department in about four to six weeks and a decision on whether to refer it to the MMC could come within weeks.

It emerged last night that Martin Edwards, the Manchester United chairman, had been prepared to sell to BSkyB at 217p a share but Greg Dyke, a director of the club and of Pearson Television, held out for 240p - an increase in the value of the club of more than £50m.

Sources close to the deal said: "Greg held out until the very end but in the end he went

along with it but only having registered his disapproval."

The United board felt the wrath of the club's fans when hundreds protested against the takeover at last night's home game against Charlton.

Earlier in the day, United and BSkyB issued an open letter to fans signed by Mark Booth, chief executive of BSkyB, and Mr Edwards. "BSkyB appreciates that this is a club with a phenomenal heritage, and the most passionate fans in the world," they said. "It is not just another business, it is part of the cultural fabric of Manchester and the nation."

Mr Edwards added: "What we have done today will secure a safe future and a prosperous future for the club. I am not about to do anything that destroys the health and tradition of this club. If I do, I deserve to be strung up."

But Andy Walsh, chairman of the Independent Manchester United Supporters Association, said: "If the club has to be sold we would prefer that it was sold to someone who has some sense for football and preferably a sense of Manchester United. People's game 'dead', page 2. Hatching of the plot, page 3. City applauds deal, page 16.

Clinton says he's sorry, yet again

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON apologised for the effects of his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky again yesterday, this time to Democratic colleagues in Congress. Even as he spoke, rules for his impeachment were being laid ahead of the arrival of the report from Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel.

At an emotional breakfast meeting at the White House, the President sought to explain himself to Democrats

BY ANDREW MARSHALL AND PHIL DAVISON

from the House of Representatives, which would handle impeachment hearings. "What we saw was a father, a husband, a leader of our country who was contrite and very sorry for his actions," said David Bonior, a senior figure in the House. "I think Democrats, when they meet with the President, talk to the President as we have, will

understand the deep, deep pain that he feels personally," he said. Members of the President's party have been highly critical of him. On his first trip out of Washington since his return from Ireland, to a school in Orlando, Florida, he was met by a crowd of about 200, some waving placards reading "Resign, you swine".

An earlier apology during the President's Irish trip made little impact and he may use another forum to make a more complete explanation, perhaps at a prayer meeting tomorrow.

But while the President tries to turn the tables on his critics, the legal machine that would take him to trial is being fine-tuned.

Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, met his Democratic counterpart, Richard Gephardt, yesterday to lay rules for how Congress will handle the Starr report, expected any day. A key issue is when, and how, it will be published.

Impeachment hearings would be handled by the House Judiciary Committee, whose chairman, the Republican Henry Hyde, yesterday reflected on the task: "This is a lousy job but somebody has to do it. Nobody looks forward to this traumatic journey we are embarking on."

Impeachment risk, page 13



Clinton: Crowd in Florida said he was a 'swine'

Fertility clinic offers 'no baby, no fee' deal

A TESTUBE baby clinic is offering infertile couples a guaranteed baby for a fee of almost £10,000 or their money back.

The Exeter Fertility Clinic is the first in Britain to offer the "no baby, no fee" scheme. Couples would be asked to pay £9,800 in advance and would receive up to 10 treatment cycles. If no baby was delivered, they would get a

BY JEREMY LAURANCE Health Editor

full refund. The offer does not include the cost of drugs, which averages £553 per cycle.

Only couples where the woman was under 40 and who had been screened to ensure there were no serious medical problems would be accepted.

The normal cost of treatment at the private clinic, which is part of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, is £1,668 per cycle, about £16,600 for 10 cycles. However, most couples give up after three or four attempts.

The scheme was criticised yesterday by Child, the infertility pressure group, which accused the clinic of "cherry picking" those couples most likely to get pregnant. Clare Brown, director of the group, said: "The way such commercial elements creep into infertility treatment is very worrying."

Peter Brinsden, medical director of the Bourn Hall clinic in Cambridgeshire, said he had considered such a scheme but rejected it as too commercial.

In the United States the "no baby, no fee" principle is well established. A common technique there is to replace eight or ten embryos per cycle. In Britain, only three embryos can be replaced at a time.

In publicity material, the Exeter clinic explains that "pregnancy may occur after just one or two treatments, in

which case the couple would have spent more than otherwise would have been the case. On the other hand they would at least have their baby."

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, which licenses clinics in the UK, said clinics were free to make whatever arrangements for payment they chose.

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A Chinese dissident was dragged away after trying to meet Mary Robinson
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BUSINESS
Credit Suisse First Boston has revealed its exposure to Russia as \$2.2bn
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Vince Wells hit an unbeaten 140 as Leicestershire made 301 against Essex
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Estuary English is talk of nation

The English language is being overwhelmed by a tide of "Estuary English" - whose spread can clearly be heard in the accents of Diana, Princess of Wales, Prince Charles and the Queen. Page 6

Thousands given wrong grades

Up to 7,000 teenagers have been given the wrong GCSE results because of a computer error. Page 10

FOREIGN NEWS

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Calls for EU sanctions on Burma

Britain is pressing for tougher EU sanctions against Burma, in response to the massive new crackdown by the military regime in Rangoon. Page 14

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Few power users set to switch

Only 10 per cent of households are forecast to switch electricity supplier when the market is opened to competition from next week. Page 17

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McGwire breaks baseball record

Mark McGwire passed the most celebrated landmark in American sport when he broke the record for the number of home runs scored in a baseball season. Page 24

THURSDAY REVIEW

20-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

David Aaronovitch

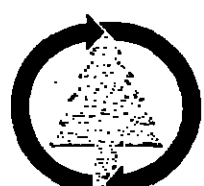
"Would it be a sign of strength if politicians and we of the press began to treat the electorate as though they were adults?" Page 3

Geoffrey Wheatcroft

"Thatcherite philistines who sneer at the whole idea of subsidising poets to prance on stage are more honest than lefty luvvies." Page 4

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT
RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of
the new material for UK newspapers
in the first half of 1998

People's
game is
dead, say
opponents

THERE WAS widespread anger

and concern at the Manchester United takeover deal yesterday. Former players, business leaders and politicians all voiced their worries for the future of football and fears for the control that could now be exercised by Rupert Murdoch.

The Irish Prime Minister and United supporter, Bertie Ahern, said: "I am not that happy about it. Neither was I happy in 1991 when the club went on to the stock market, because I think all of this just drives sport into big business. Whatever sport it is, I think it is a pity that it gets into the area of business."

Mr Ahern, who closely follows the fortunes of the club, said everyone knew the commercial orientation of Manchester United had changed after being floated on the stock market.

He believed BSkyB would be "on both sides of the table" in negotiations about the future of Premiership football on TV.

"I can do nothing about what happens in the laws in the United Kingdom or in Manchester, but it makes me more determined to advance legislation we are working on to bring forward the protection of our own sporting events. I can do something about that - and I will."

Sir Tom Finney, the former Preston North End and England winger, said: "It is absolutely frightening. We think we have reached the peak of

BY GARY FINN
AND ADAM SZRETER

transfer fees, but it is going to go further than that now. If Alex Ferguson (the club's manager) says he wants a couple of players and they cost £20m each, the money will be available. Manchester United will be able to buy all the Ronaldos they want. The game is going away from the man in the street."

Arsène Wenger, Arsenal's manager, said he expected similar deals to surface and warned of major changes in the game. "Then I would be worried because there is a danger that the rules change," he said.

"We can all see what influence television already has on the game and I think it would be a threat to the game if there was more heavy involvement with media in other clubs."

Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, said: "The other Premier League clubs now are going to have to come together to try to preserve what competitive element there still is in the Premier League."

Lord Holford, the Labour peer and chief executive of United News & Media, said: "It's a coming together of the monopoly supplier of pay and subscription television in the UK with what Murdoch himself called the 'battering ram' of sport."

David Mellor, chairman of the Football Task Force, said:



David Mellor

"The purchase by the Murdoch empire creates intolerable conflicts of interest, making the case for a regulator even more compelling"



Sir Tom Finney

"We think we have reached the peak of transfer fees, but it is going to go further. United will be able to buy all the Ronaldos they want"



Gordon Taylor

"The other Premier League clubs now are going to have to come together to try to preserve what competitive element there still is"



Bertie Ahern

"I can do nothing about what happens in the UK ... but it makes me more determined to advance laws to protect our sporting events"



Arsene Wenger

"We can see what influence TV already has on the game ... it would be a threat if there was more heavy media involvement in other clubs"



Chris Akers

"It's a good deal. It does not pose a threat to the game if you look at the Articles of Association of the League. It will still be one-club one-vote"

"The purchase of the club by the Murdoch empire creates intolerable conflicts of interest. It makes the case for a special regulator for football even more compelling."

Chris Akers, chief executive of Sporting Leeds, the media group which runs Leeds United, said the United deal came as no surprise. "I'm not a fan of Rupert Murdoch but it is a good deal," he said.

"It does not really pose a threat to the game if you look at the Articles of Association of the Premier League. It will still be one-club one-vote. I do not see Sky's involvement as being prohibitive."

The Independent Manchester United Supporters' Association (Imusa) claims Martin Edwards, the club's chief executive, has shamed it by selling up. "Football is more important than profits," said Imusa's chairman, Andy Walsh.

"This club is not to be sold like some second-hand Jag by Martin Edwards and his cohorts on the Manchester United board. Martin Edwards has shown his determination to get out of Manchester United and run away with the cash he has made on the back of the supporters ... run away with the cash he has made on the back of legends like Matt Busby, the

Busby Babes and the other great players who have played for the club in the past.

"His words that he has Manchester United close to his heart are nothing more than weasel words."

The National Federation of Football Supporters' Clubs said: "Manchester United has sold its soul." But Tony Wilson, a TV presenter and founder of Manchester's Factory Records label, which launched pop band New Order, hailed the move.

He said: "I am very much in favour of it and I am so pissed off with watching all my fellow United fans making idiots of themselves with knee-jerk re-

actions orchestrated by the media. They seem to think there is some imaginary blissful world of working class football solidarity."

The Football Association gave a guarded response. The FA's public affairs director, David Davies, said: "The agreement between Manchester United and BSkyB is to be considered by the Office of Fair Trading and we welcome that."

"But today's developments make it more important than ever that those involved explain clearly to the wider football world, and not just their own supporters, why the deal is desirable if it does go ahead."

All credit, 'The Sun' done well for the boss

BY JANE ROBINS
Media Correspondent

"THE SUN has gone completely overboard this time." The comment on the Murdoch-owned newspaper's unrelenting campaign supporting the Manchester United takeover came not from its arch-rival, The Mirror, but from an insider at The Sun's News International stablemate, The Times.

"We all think The Sun coverage has been appalling," said another Times insider. Others in the press say The Sun is simply doing what it always does - producing outrageously over-the-top headlines that further the interests of its proprietor.

"It's just the way it is," said a Sun journalist. "Rupert

phones the editor, and the line comes down. When The Sun came out for Labour at the election, there were very senior detractors on the paper. When Murdoch invested in the [Millennium] Dome, the paper changed its position overnight."

"With the Man United decision, no one thinks it worth saying they disagree. There's no point. And it's fair enough. When you join the paper, you know its pro-Murdoch."

The Sun has embroiled constantly since the news broke on Sunday, and the paper re-

sponded on Monday with a huge banner headline proclaiming: "Gold Trafford". It has ensured that every pro-Murdoch angle is expressed, and every anxiety assuaged.

Readers were told that Manchester United would be able to buy the "greatest players on the planet". Brazil's Ronaldo was one option, Italy's Vieri another, and Argentina's Ortega was "just the sort of player Fergie could afford".

Throughout the week, big names have been selectively quoted and presented as enthusiastic supporters of Mr Murdoch. While ordinary fans were "buzzing with excite-

ment" at the news, the former Manchester United manager Tommy Docherty was praising Mr Murdoch's "fantastic business coup".

The team manager, Alex Ferguson, said Sky had done a "fantastic job" for football, while Ron Atkinson, another former manager, declared that Ferguson would now "have the financial clout to dominate the superstar market".

The Times has kept its dignity with straighter news reporting. "We object to being tarred as Murdoch's tool," said one insider. But despite its protests about The Sun, much of The Times's other coverage

has been unashamedly helpful to its proprietor.

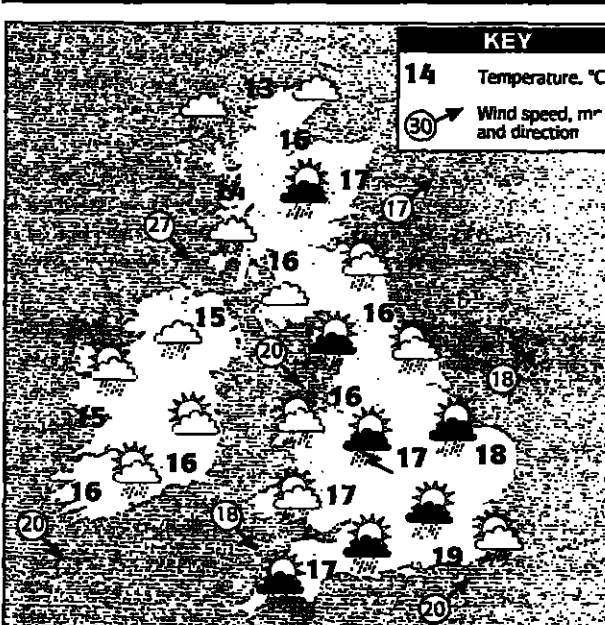
It has consistently failed to carry a leader on the subject, which would be odd for any non-Murdoch paper, and it has produced pro-Murdoch opinion on the sports pages that critics have found overly gushing. "Twining the line is something that does not need to be enforced," said a senior editor. "We've done it so many times that it just comes naturally."

Fans' objections came "in a moment of irrational panic caused by the fear of change," the paper said on Monday. And by Wednesday, when others were suggesting that the Sports

minister, Tony Banks, might resign if the Murdoch deal was supported by Government, The Times was referring to "hypocritical opposition that has been voiced by the politicians".

The Sun has also taken the opportunity to rekindle hostilities with The Mirror, and its editor, Piers Morgan, a Sun editorial declared: "One paper, edited by an immature joker with a somewhat limited future in journalism, portrayed him [Murdoch] as a red devil ... Anyone who thinks The Sun will now be biased in favour of Manchester United is either brain dead, or the jealous editor of a rival paper."

BRITAIN TODAY



FORECAST

General situation Western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be rather cool and breezy with a lot of cloud and some rain breaking out. Eastern Scotland will be brighter, but heavy showers will soon develop. England and Wales will have sunny spells and heavy, possibly thundery showers. The showers will die out later on, but more general rain will spread into north-west England towards evening.

SE England, London, E Anglia: Brief sunny spells and heavy, possibly thundery showers. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 19-21°C (66-70°F).

Channel Is, Midlands, East S, SW & West M England: Sunny spells and thundery showers. The showers easing off this afternoon. A moderate west to south-westerly wind. Max temp 17-19°C (63-66°F).

W England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Sunny spells and heavy showers. More organised rain edging in later. A fresh west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 16-18°C (61-64°F).

N Ireland: Cool and breezy with rain. Brighter in the west later. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 15-16°C (59-61°F).

SW & NW Scotland, Glasgow, W Isles: Breezy and cool with outbreaks of rain. A fresh to strong north-westerly wind. Max temp 14-17°C (57-63°F).

SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen: Bright at first, but some heavy showers developing. A moderate west to south-westerly wind. Max temp 16-19°C (61-66°F).

N Isles: Mainly cloudy with some light drizzle. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 12-14°C (54-57°F).

OUTLOOK

Becoming noticeably cooler tomorrow, Scotland, Northern Ireland and much of northern England and Wales will be cloudy with spells of rain. It will be drier elsewhere with better sunny spells. The weekend will remain cool with rain at times.

TRAVEL

Readers: Suffolk A14. Various restrictions in place. Until 31st December 1998. Berkshire M4 between J99 Maidenhead and J7 Slough. New road layout with a 50mph speed limit in a new half-mile carriageway during flood relief work. Until 30th November.

Bristol M5 J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 1st January 2001. A1 Roadworks. Call 0836 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

LIGHTING UP

	7.54pm	6.48am
Belfast	7.55pm	6.34am
Bristol	7.37pm	6.38am
Glasgow	7.48pm	6.40am
London	7.27pm	6.29am
Manchester	7.38pm	6.35am
Newcastle	7.37pm	6.31am

HIGH TIDES

	AM	HT	PM	HT
Avonmouth	10.41	13.7	11.03	13.6
Cardiff	9.54	12.7	10.20	12.6
Devonport	9.12	11.9	9.33	11.7
Dover	2.11	6.8	2.31	7.0
East Angles	2.22	6.5	2.42	6.7
Falmouth	8.43	5.5	9.04	5.5
Glasgow	3.54	3.8	4.15	3.6
Greenwich	3.11	4.2	3.24	4.2
Holyhead	1.23	6.1	1.49	5.6
Hull (Albert Dk)	9.31	9.3	10.03	8.8
Kings Lynn	9.39	7.5	10.12	6.7
Lake	5.31	6.0	6.21	5.7
Liverpool	2.22	10.1	2.45	9.6
Millford Haven	9.40	7.2	10.03	7.2
Newquay	8.83	7.2	8.57	7.2
Penzance	8.01	5.6	8.24	5.7
Portsmouth	2.25	4.8	2.57	4.9
Southport	11.31	5.2	11.55	5.2
Scarborough	7.18	6.2	7.52	5.8
Wick	2.26	3.8	3.00	3.5

Height measured in metres

AIR QUALITY

	NO ₂	PM ₁₀	O ₃
London	Good	Good	Good
S England	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good
E England	Good	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

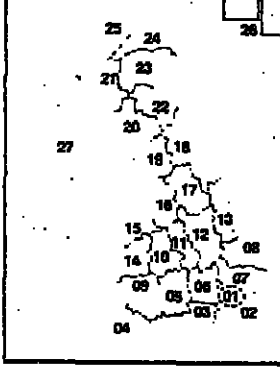
Sun rises:	06:27
Sun sets:	19:27
Moon rises:	21:49
Moon sets:	11:24

Last quarter Sept 13

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts dial 0800 5000 followed by the two digits for your area.

Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).



YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

Warmest: Gravesend 22°C (72°F)
Coldest (day): Fair Isle 13°C (55°F)
Wettest: Eskdalemuir 1.57 in
Sunniest: Dundee 8.0 hrs
For 24hrs to 2pm Wednesday

	Sea	Rain	Max
	hrs	in	°C

Aberdeen	1.8	0.13	20
Aberdeen	n/a	n/a	68
Aberdeen	3.9	0.09	19
Belfast	0.7	0.30	17
Birmingham	2.5	0.24	20
Birmingham	7.4	0.22	21
Bristol	5.5	0.12	20
Bristol	3.8	0.35	19
Cardiff	n/a	0.29	20
Cardiff	7.8	0.16	20
Cardiff	4.7	0.22	21
Edinburgh	2.9	0.07	20
Edinburgh	7.9	0.09	21
Falmouth	4.6	0.15	18
Falmouth	3.6	0.13	19
Glasgow	0.6	0.26	17
Glasgow	4.9	0.22	19
Gloucester	4.9	0.08	19
Gloucester	2.0	0.44	18
Isle of Man	6.8	0.27	19
Isle of Man	6.3	0.18	21
Jersey	6.3	0.18	21
London	n/a	n/a	68
London	4.8	0.06	20
London	0	0.30	13
London	6.1	0.15	21
London	4.0	0.12	20
London	3.5	0.07	20
Manchester	3.5	0.07	20
Manchester	1.5	0.38	19
Manchester	3.2	0.01	19
Newcastle	n/a	n/a	68
Newcastle	0.9	0.37	20
Newcastle	5.4	0.11	21
Newcastle	2.5	0.15	21
Newcastle	7.7	0.13	19
Newcastle	6.1	0.05	19
Newcastle	5.7	0.04	19
Newcastle	6.3	0.13	21
Newcastle	n/a	0.23	18
Newcastle	1.2	0.20	16
Newcastle	2.2	0.21	20
Newcastle	6.1	0.26	19
Newcastle	n/a	n/a	68
Newcastle	5.5	0.14	20
Newcastle	7.5	0.16	20

24 hours to 6pm (GMT) Tuesday

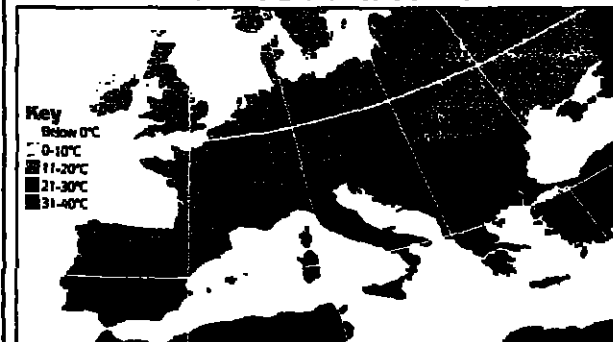
Information by PM WeatherCentre

COME RAIN OR SHINE...

GALES and winds up to 30mph were expected over the Channel today from the end of Hurricane Danielle. Flood alerts for the whole of the Channel coastline in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent. An unusually high tide put properties and farmland on the Sussex coastline under threat, with the Environment Agency asking people to stay away from the coast. Caravans near Selsey in West Sussex were moved to higher ground.

THE WORLD

EUROPE NOON TODAY



Complex Low



Martin Edwards, chief executive of Manchester United football club, at a press conference yesterday announcing that the board of the football club had accepted the multi-million pound takeover offer by BSkyB

'Murdoch Utd' plot hatched in Italy

BY PETER TRAL LARSEN
AND PAUL MCCANN

RUPERT MURDOCH's plans to take control of a British football club were hatched after a meeting with Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian media mogul and one-time Italian prime minister, earlier this year.

Mr Berlusconi told Mr Murdoch, who visited Italy in the Spring, of the immense bargaining power that football clubs can wield if they control their own television rights. In Italy a small group of top clubs – including Juventus and AC Milan, the club owned by Mr Berlusconi – have negotiated a lucrative television deal with Telepiù, his pay-TV operator.

Returning from Italy, Mr Murdoch telephoned Mark Booth, the chief executive of British Sky Broadcasting, and told him that BSkyB needed to buy a football club if it was to hang on to the television rights to key matches.

The next move was for Booth, BSkyB's new American chief executive, to meet Manchester United's chief executive, Martin Edwards. Booth, 41, is a long-time Murdoch man who joined BSkyB from its Japanese sister company in January. It was a meeting at his West London office on a rainy day in June that set Project Moore under way – the name Moore (after Bobby Moore, captain of England's 1966 World Cup-winning team) was chosen as a codename to throw the scent of Manchester United.

"Project Bobby Charlton would have been a bit obvious," said one banking source last night.

Edwards, United's chief executive and largest shareholder,



Ryan Giggs and David Beckham, United's star assets

er was in Sky's offices for one of the broadcaster's regular meetings with the head of Premier League teams. After discussing the future of televised football Booth made his offer: "I'll buy you out."

Edwards, who had been running Manchester United for more than 30 years, was known to be keen to sell the business.

It was no secret that Edwards was looking to cash in his 14 per cent share in the club. He was willing to sell the whole club for £20m in 1989 and has reportedly already made £30m from selling blocks of his United shares. Last year, he turned down an offer for the club from VCI, the video production group chaired by former Channel 4 boss Michael Grade.

For the rest of June and July Edwards and Booth negotiated face-to-face. A tiny team of advisers, including Peter Kenyon, United's deputy chief executive, and Martin Stewart, BSkyB's chief financial officer, knew of the talks.

In August, the negotiating teams grew larger and BSkyB brought in its bankers, Goldman Sachs, while Manchester

United turned to HSBC and Merrill Lynch.

Negotiations came to a head last week, when BSkyB tabled a bid which valued Manchester United shares at 217p. Although Mr Edwards and Professor Sir Roland Smith, the club's chairman, were keen to accept the deal, it is thought that Greg Dyke, the former London Weekend Television boss, who is a non-executive director of Manchester United, convinced them to hold out for more.

Dyke, a lifelong United fan, argued that the club was one of the few in Britain big enough to survive on its own. He also believed that football teams had been under-valued by the City for the last two years. If the club waited a couple of years, it could get a much better price.

After news of the talks leaked on Sunday, unleashing a storm of protest from fans and politicians, negotiations became more urgent.

Manchester United's financial advisers told BSkyB's bankers, Goldman Sachs, that the offer undervalued the potential revenues from pay-per-view football matches once

BSkyB's current deal with the Premier League ends in 2001.

Throughout Monday and Tuesday, BSkyB's directors and advisers, who were camped in the broadcaster's head office in Isleworth, west London, negotiated by telephone and fax with the Manchester United team, which was based at HSBC's offices in the City.

In the mean time Rupert Murdoch, who was visiting London on Tuesday for the funeral of Lord Rothermere, the press baron, was kept up to date on how the negotiations were progressing.

BSkyB tabled what it said was its final offer on Tuesday afternoon: this valued the shares at 225p each. BSkyB also set a deadline of 5pm for Manchester United to accept the bid.

However, the club's directors once again rejected the bid and allowed the deadline to pass. Eventually, at about 7pm, BSkyB tabled its final cash and shares offer, valuing Manchester United at £623.4m, or 240p a share – adding 23p a share to its original offer – which was unanimously accepted.

Dyke knew that he was defeated and agreed to vote in favour of the deal to ensure a unanimous recommendation to shareholders.

Yesterday to register his opposition he donated the £50,000 profit he will make on his own shares to Manchester charities.

The reason for the record-breaking deal is deceptively simple. Last year Manchester United earned £12.6m from the televising of its matches. Murdoch has spent £523m buying the club because he knows he can make that £12.6m figure a great deal bigger.

At present the division of television money between Premiership clubs is based on a three-part formula. Last year every club got a basic £3m. Then each got a facility fee that was paid according to the number of times the BBC or Sky Sports screened one of its games. On top of this there was a merit award based on a club's league position at the end of the season.

This formula is only indirectly related to the ratings figures for matches. Rupert Murdoch has bought Manchester United for the simple reason that pay per view television will make the relationship between money earned and the number of armchair fans an absolutely direct one.

The arrival of digital televi-

sion offers both a threat and an opportunity. The threat is that with a massive digital spectrum anyone can become a broadcaster. The distribution system becomes less important. Instead owning the content of the broadcasts becomes important – which is precisely how Mr Murdoch sees Manchester United, not as a 120-year old football club, but as television 'content', just like his Twentieth Century Fox film studio.

How quickly pay per view arrives depends on the Restrictive Practices Court. It meets in January to decide whether the Premier League's sale of television rights to BSkyB amounts to a cartel. If it tears up the current Premier League-BSkyB contract, Murdoch is protected because Man-

chester United will quickly be in the position to sell its games on a subscription or pay per view basis – whatever it thinks it can get away with.

It is more likely that the court will tinker with the Premiership television contract, but leave it largely intact until 2001 when it expires. And that is when Manchester United will be worth its £623m – and potentially much more.

It will give Murdoch a strong negotiating position for the next television deal when all teams will be looking to exploit pay per view.

Not only does BSkyB's contract with the Premiership expire, but so too does a £100m contract currently held by the sports agents IMG and French media giant Canal+ to sell the

rights to Premiership games outside the UK.

With his Star satellite system in Asia and his share in El Globo, the South American satellite, Murdoch is in a perfect position to extend the pay per viewer all around the globe.

And Manchester United is the perfect team to use to create the global electronic stadium. The official fan club has 200 branches and 140,000 members. It is the most recognised sporting brand in the world and its Supporters' Association claims 100 million members worldwide. Either as a 'battering ram' to grow his satellite services, or as a pay-per-view earner, if Manchester United has fans, Murdoch's satellites can reach them and charge them for watching.

Butcher who cleaved fortune from football

BY KATHY MARKS

MARTIN EDWARDS, chairman and chief executive of Manchester United, was born with a silver meat cleaver in his mouth and went on to inherit the crown jewels of football.

The family's ownership of large chunks of United goes back nearly four decades. Martin's father, Louis, a flamboyant, millionaire butcher, became a director in 1958, the day after the Munich air crash wiped out half of the "Busby Babes" team.

Thanks to the deal with Rupert Murdoch, Martin Edwards, 52, is one of the most unpopular men in Britain. But he has long been vilified by the club's supporters, who claim he has no great love of the game and occupies a different planet from most fans.

Such criticism is rejected by Mr Edwards, who went to his first Old Trafford match when he was seven and still has the programme to prove it.

He also dismisses the idea that he was handed the team on a plate, saying he was already



Martin Edwards and his wife Sue watching a game PA

a major shareholder when Louis died in 1980, bequeathing him the stake that gave him overall control.

But it is difficult for Mr Edwards to dispute that he received a leg up. Having gone into the family meat trade straight from public school, he was given a seat on the United board by his father at the age of 24 – an attempt by Louis to seduce him away from a career in rugby, he says.

Certainly, the club has been

a nice little earner for Mr Edwards, to put it mildly. Rupert Murdoch's offer values his 14 per cent holding at £37m: not bad, considering that his total investment over the years – including buying the initial stake and taking up a rights issue – has been £200,000.

Edwards senior, a diehard United supporter whose ostentatious lifestyle earned him the nickname Champagne Louis, acquired his controlling share for about £30,000 in the

Sixties. Louis died soon after a Granada TV documentary alleged that he gained control in a series of unorthodox share deals involving large cash payments and irregular documentation.

Martin, who was never the subject of any allegations, worked for the family firm for 16 years. He likes to tell that he began right at the bottom, hacking meat on the butcher's block and selling pasties and pies from a van.

At the United helm, he was pilloried for two previous attempts to sell the club. He presided over the flotation in 1991 and has accumulated about £30 million since then by selling off shares.

Edwards lives with his wife, Sue, in Wilmslow, Cheshire, which is millionaire territory, and is famously publicly shy. Lucid tabloid stories linking him with a series of young women have tried his patience in recent years.

But the current crop of front and back-page stories probably take the biscuit.

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Chechen hostages show the strain

BY LOUISE JURY

THE FAMILIES of two Britons held hostage in Chechnya welcomed video evidence yesterday that the pair were still alive, but said they feared the publicity might put their lives at risk.

The Russian government's decision to release the two-minute footage could raise the stakes and make it more difficult to secure the couple's release, the families said.

The video showed Camilla Carr, 40, from Bath, and Jon James, 38, from Lydney, Gloucestershire, in reasonable health. But the strains of having spent more than a year in captivity were clear. They appeared thin and although Ms Carr spoke with some spirit, Mr James appeared more unhappy.

The two-minute video was the second to show them alive. In it, the couple said they had received some post sent from home. Mr James said he hoped it would be over soon as he did not know how much longer he could stay sane. Ms Carr added: "But we will."

Raj Carr, Ms Carr's brother, said the video, which came several months after earlier footage of the couple, had been a "great shock".

"Jon and Camilla certainly look healthy - we know fairly well that most of the other hostages were well fed. But psychological scars you can't see on video..."

"It's the kind of coverage we didn't want because it kind of ups the stakes. It's a great shock that it's suddenly been lifted into the international arena," he added.

THE OTHER CAPTIVES

THREE OTHER Britons are held hostage abroad. Keith Mangan and Paul Wells were seized in Kashmir in July 1995, while John Kear, who has dual British-New Zealand nationality, was captured in the Democratic Republic of Congo last month.

There has been no news of Mr Mangan, from near Middlesbrough, and Mr Wells, from Blackburn, Lancashire, who were taken at gunpoint with their partners and an American, Norwegian and a German. The two women were later freed, but a month after the kidnapping the Norwegian was found beheaded. There has been no news of the rest of the group since December 1995.

But if the problems of Chechnya were brought to world attention it might not be a bad development, Mr Carr said. "The international community should be doing something about the situation there. It's appalling."

Jon James and Camilla Carr were snatched by gunmen in July last year while working at a children's home in the breakaway state of the former Soviet Union.

Doris James, Mr James's mother, said she had mixed emotions as she watched the video, which was dated 24 August. "It was good to see them, but

it also brought back the fact that they are not here. Now I just hope things get moving."

Rod Tuckwell, a family friend, said the footage raised some important questions. "If they can get mail from home there must be a path to them. Someone must know where they are," he said.

"I hope this video will be the start of some sort of movement and not a one-off incident. But it was wonderful to see and hear them."

Secret payments of up to \$400,000 are believed to have secured the release of hostages of other nationalities in Chechnya. The James and Carr families have received ransom demands, although none which clearly came from the captors. Even if they had the money, the families oppose ransom payments.

It was unclear yesterday how the footage came into the hands of Alexei Mitrofanov, the chairman of the Russian government's committee on geopolitics who took the decision to hold a press conference and to show the video.

A Foreign Office spokesman said it was very encouraged to have recent evidence that the couple were alive and together.

"As soon as we got a copy of the footage we showed it to the two families. We are always working around the clock in our efforts in this case and we shall continue to do so."

Islamic fundamentalists are often blamed for tensions in the region, but Raj Carr said it was the billion dollar potential of oil under the Caspian Sea that was the key, as gangs fought for control of transportation routes.



Camilla Carr and Jon James on the video shown to their families; the two Britons have been held in Chechnya since July last year BBC TV

Wives of straying academics form support group

A SUPPORT group for wives whose husbands in academia have deserted them for students has been set up on the Internet. It was created by Jean Norris, whose husband, a social science lecturer at Southampton Institute, had relationships with more than one student. She said the response had been "enormous".

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Her story is told in today's education section of *The Independent*. Mrs Norris will not say how many people have contacted her since the group was established on the Internet 10 days ago but she said: "It is common for academic men to

have affairs with female students. I know that it's rife. It's endemic in universities and colleges. But they won't address it."

Students who have had affairs with academics and those who have witnessed staff-student relationships have also been in touch.

One person who contacted

Mrs Norris said they were penalised and intimidated by the academic hierarchy when they tried to bring an affair out into the open.

Both the lecturers' unions have codes of conduct that cover the issue of affairs between dons and students. The Association of University Teachers says that such rela-

tionships raise questions of conflict of interests and may mean that students are not treated equally.

Paul Norris was disciplined by his managers at Southampton Institute six years ago for having an affair. Mrs Norris has named a second student in her divorce action.

The institute has rules that

prevent lecturers supervising a student with whom they are having a relationship and which say that any affairs must be declared to heads of department.

Lawyers are understood to have told the institute that Mr Norris' behaviour did not provide grounds for dismissal.

Mr Norris said that he did not begin his latest relationship

with a student, a 21-year-old, until June last year after he had left his wife.

"The dean was informed. I had nothing to do with the student's work. All her course work and examination papers went to the external examiners," he said.

Mrs Norris believes that universities should go further in

disciplining academics who have affairs with students. She wants the lecturer to be suspended at once and a formal inquiry, whose results will be made public.

The affair should remain permanently on an academic's record, she says.

Higher love is so low, Education, page 2.

IN BRIEF

Brothers accused of 'Mardi Gras' bombings are sent for trial

TWO BROTHERS accused of the "Mardi Gras" bombing and blackmail plot, mainly against branches of Barclays bank and Sainsbury, were yesterday committed for trial at the Old Bailey. Ronald Pearce, 66, and Edgar Pearce, 60, face a total of 20 charges linked with the three-and-a-half-year campaign. The two men were remanded in custody and will reappear at the Old Bailey on October 16.

Police hunt pub landlord's killer

POLICE ARE hunting the killer of a pub landlord found tied up and shot in the back in the cellar of his pub. Tariq Javed Sattar, 35, was found on Tuesday at the Black Bull in Birkby, Rotherham, after what officers believe was a bungled robbery. Mr Sattar was found by the landlord of a neighbouring pub who called when the Black Bull remained closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Straw wants clubs for fathers

MEN SHOULD get together in "dads' clubs" to discuss the problems of raising children, Jack Straw, Home Secretary, said yesterday. He told the Mothers' Union that men were still too "secretive" and unwilling to disclose their emotions, and should set up support networks.

'Free Willy' star sent death threat

SECURITY IS being tightened in Heimaey in the Westman islands, off Iceland, after a death threat was made yesterday against Keiko the whale, star of the *Free Willy* movie, who is being returned to his native Icelandic waters today. The threat was made in a letter to Iceland's largest daily paper, *Morgunblaðið*.

Dolly makes a mark in commercial world

DOLLY, THE first cloned sheep, is to become a trademark to prevent her picture being used inappropriately, her creators said yesterday.

The application to register her name was made by the Roslin Institute after Zamuski, the electrical manufacturers, produced an advertisement showing a sheep called Dolly with the caption "The Misapprehension of Science".

Dr Harry Griffin, assistant director at the Edinburgh institute where Dolly was cloned, said the advertisement was derogatory and had incensed scientists.

"It is grossly untrue to suggest as a statement of fact that Dolly is a misapprehension of science," he said. The science that led to Dolly, he added, would have very large positive benefits for society, particularly in medicine.

"Our technology has already

been used to create sheep that will produce human blood clotting factor in their milk so as to provide new treatments for haemophilia.

"In the future, we expect that the same technology will help solve the chronic shortfall in organs for transplant." He said that Zamuski was "clearly ignorant" of the reasons behind the cloning.

The company said it had agreed to withdraw the posters "as a goodwill gesture".

A spokeswoman for Zamuski said the poster was part of a £3.5m campaign that was due to run until November.

It showed three different images with the statement "The Misapprehension of Science". The first was a nuclear mushroom cloud, the second a dead fish in a polluted river, and the third was a sheep called Dolly,

but it was not the cloned animal.

John Kershaw, head of marketing at Zamuski, said the advertisement was meant to provoke debate.

"The application of science has revolutionised the 20th century and brought enormous strides forward in areas like medicine. But we feel it is still important to evaluate the role science should have in everyday life and in the future," he said. "Our advertising is aimed to develop discussion. However, we have decided to withdraw this particular poster in response to concerns expressed by the Roslin Institute because we do not wish to offend them."

But Dr Griffin said the institute did not want to take any more chances that companies would misuse Dolly's picture. "We hope that by trade marking Dolly we will have a mechanism that will prevent



Dolly: The cloned version produced by scientists

inappropriate use of her," he said. "The Scottish National Party used her on posters to suggest that the opposition parties were all clones. That was fine because it was not denigrating our science but once she is a registered trademark then people will have to ask us if they can use her picture."

He denied that the institute had taken the action to keep any potential merchandising power for itself. "We discussed [Dolly mugs and T-shirts]," said Dr Griffin. "But it was decided that it would be inappropriate."

Labour expels MP for 'misconduct'

TOMMY GRAHAM was expelled from the Labour Party yesterday for alleged misconduct dating back at least five years.

Mr Graham, 54, MP for Renfrewshire West, said he was "shocked and saddened" at the move, which ends his 33-year party membership, and he intends to challenge it.

The ruling followed a two-day hearing of Labour's National Constitutional Committee in Glasgow into allegations that he had acted in a way prejudicial to the party.

He was suspended from Labour's parliamentary ranks 14 months ago after the suicide of the MP for Paisley South, Gordon McMaster, brought to a head years of in-fighting and allegations of sleaze within Labour ranks in Renfrewshire.

Mr Graham was later cleared of smearing Mr McMaster, but remained accused of behaviour detrimental to Labour's interests.

The decision to expel him came after Mr Graham, repre-

senting himself, gave evidence after listening to his accusers for nine hours. He has already said that, if expelled, he intends to continue sitting as an MP and will work to clear his name through the courts.

Details of the five charges against Mr Graham, MP for West Renfrewshire, have not been disclosed, but there is no appeal from a constitutional committee decision.

Large parts of the hearing were taken up with the alleged spreading of a rumour of a compromising photograph of a gay trade union official.

The photograph's existence has never been confirmed, but a dispute has developed over who was responsible for the rumour.

Jim Devine, election agent to the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and himself a prominent Labour figure, denied he was responsible and said he had gone to the hearing to declare this as it was the only forum open to him to do so.

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DELL

British Association: The people's accent; how to tell if you're getting old; boys' herd instinct; and the origin of life

Estuary English is talk of the nation

LANGUAGE

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

THE ENGLISH language is being overwhelmed by a tide of "Estuary English", it was claimed yesterday.

Its rapid spread could most clearly be perceived by comparing the accents of Diana, Princess of Wales, the Prince of Wales and the Queen. Professor John Wells of University College London said:

"Diana would pronounce words like 'Tuesday' and 'reduce' more like 'chewsday' and 'rejuice'. Other changes were also spreading from London and the South-east, the centre of the new pronunciation, where the 'l' in 'milk', 'myself' and 'middle' was being transformed into a 'w', and the glottal stop was spreading like a rash into phrases such as 'not only but also', which was becoming 'no' only but also'.

Professor Wells is carrying out a study of the advance of Estuary English, which is overtaking 'Received Pronunciation' (RP) as the language of educated Londoners.

"Princess Diana is a very good example of generational change in pronunciation," he said yesterday. "Compare her

HOW DO YOU SAY ... ?

Ten words to check your accent

	RP	ESTUARY
Newspaper	nyooz-paper	nyooz-paper
Situation	sich-oo-ation	sit-yoo-ation
During	Jor-ing	Jear-ing
February	Feb-broo-ary	Febbew-ary
Palm	Pahm	Pahm
Glibberish	Jibberish	Glibberish (like gibbon)
Careless	Care-lehss	Care-luhss
Schedule	Shej-ool	Sked-yool
White	Hwite	Wite
Historic	Hi-storic	Istoric (no h)

pronunciation with that of Prince Charles, which is much more conservative; and the Queen's, which is much more conservative than his."

The differences in age - 12 years - between Prince Charles and his former wife indicated how rapidly "Estuary English" was establishing itself. "Diana still had an upper-class accent but it was different from Prince Charles's."

Another exponent of the new accent is Tony Blair, whose accent is noticeably more glottal when he appears on popular television programmes, such as the *Des O'Connor Show*, than when he is making a political speech. "Tony Blair exhibits

flexibility, which is a good thing," Professor Wells said. "Your accent is a badge you wear, which tells people what sort of person you are. If you can be flexible, then you can fit in with many groups."

While the new pronunciation is spreading fast, the language's content is altering more slowly. It is partly, but not exclusively, driven by American modes of speaking. For example, Americans avoid glottal stops, and talk about "zebras" where British children describe "zeb-bras".

Surprisingly, ethnic groups such as West Indians and Asians are having no noticeable effect on wider pronunciation,

although they have introduced or revived older words, such as "ax" for "ask", now a common usage among urban blacks.

Professor Wells is carrying out a study to see how quickly the new pronunciations are moving from the capital to other areas.

"The spread is not influenced by the media - news-readers and soap stars don't matter; what matters is your peer group," he said. "The only way that the media matters is that it rapidly exposes more people to different accents than their own."

The new tide of change is the third to wash over English this century. In the years to the 1940s the distinction between "faw" and "four" disappeared, and the phrase "very sorry" lost its hard "r". "Nowadays, we listen with amazement to British films of the 1930s and 1940s," Professor Wells said.

In the middle of the century, the likes of "sure" and "poor" began to sound identical to "shore" and "pour", and words such as "perpetual" acquired a "ch" sound in the third syllable.

"These changes have not been completed: middle-aged Received Pronunciation speakers are often inconsistent about them," Professor Wells said.



Ian Russell, of Interactive Science Ltd, performing an experiment that involved firing a bottle of water into the air at 200mph during his lecture on 'Exploding Custard' at the Festival of Science in Cardiff. Tom Pilston

Sense of balance is a clue to ageing

A SIMPLE TEST of how well people are able to maintain their balance when standing on one leg is being used to forecast how rapidly they will age in later life. The research is part of Britain's biggest study into why some people age faster than others.

Scientists are testing a theory that people's sense of balance is an accurate forecaster of their future decline in physical and mental ability as they grow older. They believe the balance test could indicate a person's rate of ageing.

The theory is that the back part of the brain, called the cerebellum, is involved in both maintaining balance and controlling higher mental functions. As the cerebellum declines with age, then the detrimental effects on a person's sense of balance become a good measure of future mental decline.

Professor Patrick Rabbitt, director of the age research centre at Manchester University, told the British Association that there is convincing evi-

HEALTH
BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

dence that balance could become the simplest and most reliable way of measuring a person's rate of ageing.

"Anything that is bad for the cerebellum is not only bad for your balance, but is also bad for cognitive processes. It may be possible to predict people's rate of ageing in the future," Professor Rabbitt said.

More people than ever are living longer, with life expectancy over the past 60 years increasing by an average of 15 years, yet 11 of these years are spent living with the degenerative illnesses of old age.

"We've increased the time people live with various medical problems," said Dr Alf Game, from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, which announced an extra £5 million yesterday for studies on ageing.

Professor Rabbitt has led the biggest study, monitoring 6,500 people since 1982 for the effects

of ageing. Part of the tests involved monitoring their ability to balance themselves on machines designed to test how their muscles control swaying and stability.

The study also found that some people went into a far faster rate of physical and mental decline than others. "The best 70-year-olds were quite comparable to 40-year-olds. The picture is that some individuals are relatively well preserved for a very long time," Professor Rabbitt said.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin were the first to show that balance could be used to forecast more than 80 per cent of the variation in the age-related decline.

"Balance is a complicated thing because you are using visual information, you are using information from your [middle ear], you are using information from your muscle receptors. If you lose muscle strength as you do when you get older, you may lose your balance for that reason," Professor Rabbitt said.

Peer pressure retards boys Finally, the very start of things

SCHOOLBOYS WORSHIP the image of unemotional "hard men" such as Vinnie Jones - who are good at football and skimp at schoolwork - but it may hold them back academically, research suggests. The solution may be to split boys' classes into smaller groups so they can express themselves and not be worried by peer pressure, says Dr Anne Phoenix of Birkbeck College, London.

"The message we got from talking to boys aged 11 to 14 is that you can't be masculine and be seen to work hard at school," Dr Phoenix said yesterday. "Other boys, and even teachers, see high-achieving boys as somehow effeminate."

Schoolboys - who are oth-

EDUCATION
BY CHARLES ARTHUR

erwise "emotionally illiterate", and find girls mystifying because they cry - do find women, either their mothers or female friends, to be useful confidantes for personal matters. "Evidence from older boys shows that having long-term girlfriends makes them able to discuss emotional issues."

The problem of would-be macho boys was identified in 1977. But in those days, Dr Phoenix said, boys who left school with poor qualifications could still go into manual jobs. "But now if they don't work at school, they won't be in a job that pays at all."

EVOLUTION
BY STEVE CONNOR

SCIENTISTS HAVE discovered a site on the ocean floor that is identical to the hot, watery cauldron where life on Earth originated more than 4 billion years ago.

A team of oceanographers from Britain and France has found the first "black smoker" - a hydrothermal vent that spews out a chemical-rich, sooty soup - which is rich in the vital ingredients that were the spark of life.

Other black smokers, which form tall chimney stacks of mineral deposits on the seabed, have relatively sparse amounts of hydrogen, which scientists believe was critical for life to evolve 4 billion years ago when the Earth lacked a source of oxygen.

However, a black smoker with abundant amounts of hydrogen has been discovered by a French scientist working on co-ordinates provided by a British oceanographic expedition, said Joe Cann, professor of Earth sciences at Leeds University. He added: "There is hydrogen in all black smokers, but in this smoker there is 15 times more hydrogen and that is extraordinary."

British economy has half a chance

BRITAIN STANDS A 50/50 chance of being hit by a recession that would wreck job prospects and create a crisis of confidence in the housing market, a Cambridge economist predicts.

Professor Hashem Pesaran said that without important changes in monetary and fiscal policy, the likelihood of the Government meeting its inflation target without damaging the economy's growth prospects could be "rather low".

EMPLOYMENT
BY STEVE CONNOR

The professor's forecasts include:

- An 80 per cent probability that inflation could be kept below the government target of 2.5 per cent in the short term.
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Opera to shut for year and fire staff

THE ROYAL OPERA will be shut for the whole of next year and staff will be made redundant in a last-ditch attempt to stave off bankruptcy.

But the board, headed by Sir Colin Southgate, is still demanding the Arts Council give it its £14.4m grant next April, even though the opera company will not give a single performance.

The Royal Opera House has already been given £20m of lottery money to see it through the closure period.

Sir Colin also revealed yesterday, in almost an aside, that even if the ROH were given extra government money it would not be able to run its new 430-seat studio theatre without further private sponsorship. The studio theatre had been hailed as a key part of the £214m redevelopment which would showcase new opera and dance and bring in new audiences.

The public would be able to see it on tours of the building, he said, even though there would be no performances to look at.

By DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

As critics predicted that privatisation was now inevitable, revealed a package of measures, publicly backed by Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to change for ever the way Britain's most troubled cultural institution is run.

Sir Colin said he was determined to modernise it, make it more efficient and bring prices down and that he and the new board were not to blame for the opera house's £13m deficit.

"Don't look at me," he said. "I'm the sucker who took on this poisoned chalice." The opera company chairman, the composer Michael Berkeley, added: "You've been asking us to do something radical. Now we are doing it."

Sir Colin said the opera house, in Covent Garden, London, would not re-open in December 1999 after its £250m redevelopment unless the Gov-



Sir Colin Southgate after addressing the Royal Opera House staff yesterday in Conway Hall, central London

Andrew Buurman

ernment came up with yet more public funding.

He also said that when the house did re-open there would be a reduced number of opera and ballet performances to keep within budget, and the unions would have to agree to new working agreements so that there could be more live transmissions.

But the leading classical music and opera promoter Raymond Gubbay said last

night: "It's ridiculous that Sir Colin is asking for the full grant. Those funds should be used as a bridge towards privatisation. That is now the only outcome."

"How can you suddenly change plans in this way when you have been given special sums of money for the closure period? They are not fulfilling their side of the bargain, and the public are losing out."

Dennis Scard, general secretary of the Musicians' Union,

added: "This decision is cultural vandalism on a grand scale, and the notion of a multi-million-pound, newly revamped opera house with a part-time orchestra presenting fewer productions than the old house beggars belief."

Sir Colin told a stunned meeting of staff that they must agree to new working practices or be given notice. Even if they did agree, every member of staff would be reas-

signed and, he said, "there will inevitably be redundancies".

Mr Smith said of the rescue plan, intended to save around £5m next year: "The board of the ROH has now taken a real grip on the problems that have beset the institution for too long. These decisions are radical; they represent real reform; they will transform the management of the ROH, and they provide a way forward to a new and sustainable future."

The performers' union Equity said: "The opera singers, who are now facing the sack, have no responsibility for the managerial and financial mess the Royal Opera House now finds itself in."

The Royal Ballet will continue to perform next year but will give fewer performances in Britain than usual.

Leading article, Geoffrey Wheatcroft, Review, page 3

Now it's Boots the dentist

By NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

BOOTS THE Chemist is set to become Boots the Dentist under a plan unveiled yesterday. Boots is planning to open six dental practices next year as part of a trial scheme that could see the high street giant expand further into the dentistry market.

The surgeries will offer a mix of private and NHS services and be located in stores or separate high street locations. The move is part of Boots strategy to offer additional health-related services in addition to its chemist business. It already operates Boots the Opticians which has 285 branches. In April it began offering health and travel insurance. Last year Boots announced plans to open six trial doctor's surgeries in conjunction with medical group Sinclair Montrose. The first two or three should open before Christmas. Boots also began a pilot scheme last year where some stores included service counters advising on skin care, oral hygiene and hair colouring.

"Dentistry in the UK is going through an exciting period of change," said Steve Russell, Boots the Chemists' managing director. "The move is a necessary first step in a programme to explore thoroughly the opportunities in the corporate dentistry market."

The dentistry market is worth £1.9bn a year and grew by 8 per cent last year. Boots needs a capital investment of £3m and revenue expenditure of £7m over the first two years.

Boots is paying £250,000 for Wilson's Dentistry which is one of 27 Dental Body Corporates in the UK. These bodies enable companies to operate a number of surgeries outside the usual partnership structure.

Boots strategy to extend to additional health-related services is something some analysts have long championed.

Bristol heart scandal surgeon is dismissed

JANARDAN DHASMANA, one of the surgeons at the centre of the Bristol heart babies scandal, has been sacked, it was announced last night.

A General Medical Council inquiry found Mr Dhasmana guilty of serious professional misconduct over the deaths of

By MARK WOODS

29 babies at the Bristol Royal Infirmary. Another four babies were left seriously brain damaged after heart surgery.

The other two surgeons involved, James Wisheart and Dr John Roylance, were both

struck off, but Mr Dhasmana was banned from performing heart surgery on children for three years.

A spokeswoman for Bristol Royal Infirmary said: "The United Bristol Healthcare Trust today announced that it had, with regret, terminated the

contract of employment of Mr Janardan Dhasmana. The decision has been made by Hugh Ross, chief executive of the Trust. Mr Dhasmana has the right of appeal against the decision to a panel of non-executive directors of the UBHT."

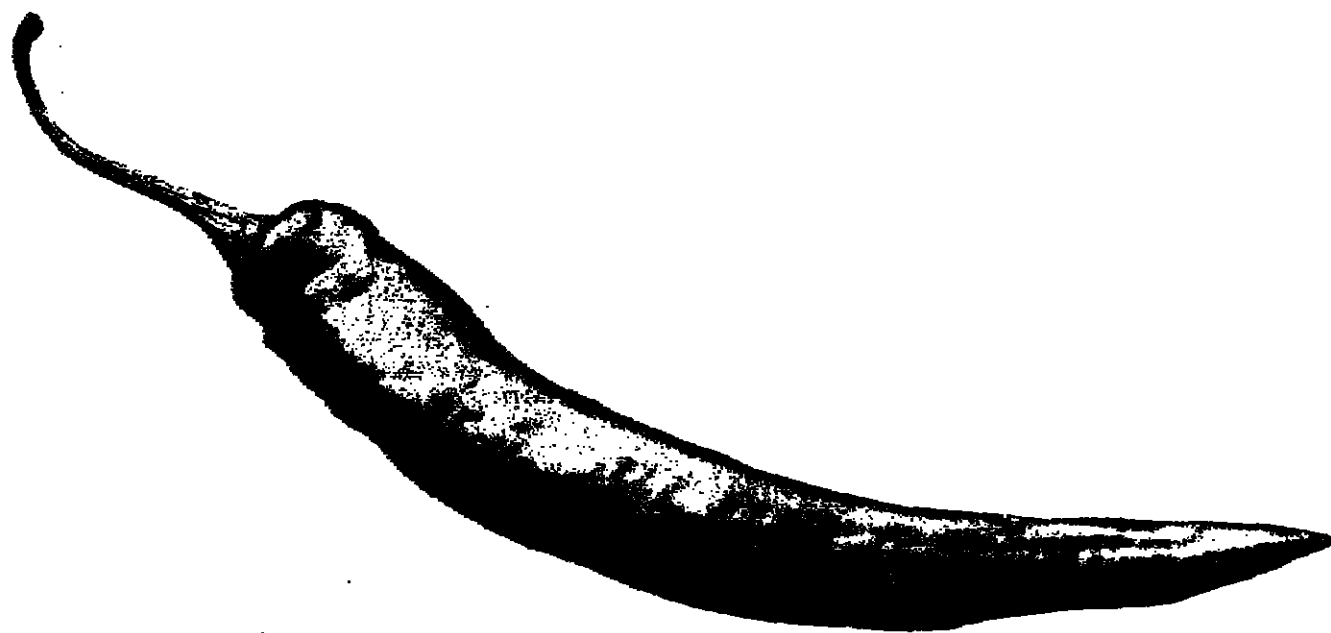
"In view of Mr Dhasmana's

right of appeal, the trust will make no further comment at this stage."

Maria Shortis, founder of the Bristol Heart Children's Action Group and whose daughter died during surgery at the hospital, was delighted by the news. She said: "What a relief, this is not before time. It is the only decision they could have made. I cannot tell you how relieved I am that he will not be allowed to carry out any more operations."

Malcolm Curnow, of the action group, said: "Under the circumstances we feel this is wholly appropriate. His position was untenable. But there is nothing to stop him from working at another hospital or setting up at a private clinic. This gives us cause for concern. He should have been struck off by the GMC as the other two doctors involved were."

FIRE EXTINGUISHING EQUIPMENT



How green is your trolley?

In Britain's shops and markets, organic food has never been more popular. But the industry itself does not enjoy such rude health. By Richard McClure

There are no takers at the tofu stall. The tattooed couple selling hemp products are not exactly swamped with customers, either. In fact, the Sunday crowds at Spitalfields indoor market, in east London, barely register the health food zealots and marijuana evangelists as they go about their weekly shop.

Over at the stalls selling organic produce, though, it is a very different story. The scrum of people has barely subsided since early morning. Customers come and go clutching bagloads of Guatemalan coffee beans, Leicestershire mince and other wholesome, nutritious foodstuffs.

Just a few years ago, the organic stallholders would have stood as idle as the tofu traders, their produce equally shunned as fodder for hair-shirted food fascists who haunt Holland & Barrett. Not now, though. The BSE and E coli scares have seen to that. "For me, there's nothing New Age or cranky about it," says Inga Phipps, a publisher, clasp- ing a brace of red peppers. "I grew up in a farming community in Dorset and I know what they do to the animals, and the pesticides they use. I'm certainly not subscribing to the latest food fad. It's simply a matter of eating healthily."

She is not alone. According to a Mintel survey, organic food has shed its associations with "committed activists and vegetarians" and become a staple of the high street. Marks & Spencer has just re-introduced organic items after a hiatus of five years, while Sainsbury's plans to extend its range after a customer survey found a massive demand for pesticide-free food.

It seems we've all gone organic-maniac. At least, that's what the figures suggest: an annual UK business of £360m; a domestic market that has doubled since 1995; and a global market likely to increase

tenfold in eight years. It is a wonder we can find any chemical-coated food on the menu at all.

But behind the healthy glow of changing attitudes and upward sales predictions, the organic market is not quite as robust as it seems. Although Mintel reported that three-quarters of customers are "sympathetic" to the idea of buying natural foods, it also found that the produce is bought predominantly by the young, affluent and childless, while almost one-third of us have never even touched the stuff.

"It is definitely a middle-class market," says Thoby Young, whose Fresh Food Company supplies organic fruit and vegetable boxes around the country. "Organic production is spread throughout the UK, but our customers are mainly concentrated in the more prosperous parts of the South-east."

The main stumbling-block to organic's move into the mainstream is



Vivienne Matravels and her daughter Amy feed the chickens at their organic farm in Long Whatton, Leicestershire

Adrian Dennis

methods more labour-intensive," says Elliott. "It is a better product, but the price is certainly prohibitive for some people - that's partly why the market is still so small."

Elliott, 33, who was born in Mississippi, set up Planet Organic with her business partner Jonathan Dwek in 1995. Catering to a fashionable clientele in Notting Hill, west London, the store was awarded Organic Retailer of the Year in

1997, but plans to open another outlet have so far come to naught. "We hope to open another London store soon," she says, "but research has shown that outside the capital, only towns with the demographics of Windsor or Oxford could sustain a store the size of ours."

At Spitalfields, the luxury nature of organic produce is not disputed. "We're very lucky in that we can afford to buy it," chorus Sam and Sarah, two dancers who have travelled from south London to stock up for the week. "We realise it's something of an indulgence, but we need to be healthy for our work, so good food is a priority."

The bananas spilling out of their bags may be twice the price of the non-organic fare found at the local greengrocers, but at least they look appetising. Yet the erratic quality of the produce can be another deterrent to the consumer. With most shoppers accustomed to the visually perfect Class I products sold in supermarkets, it can be a shock to be confronted with the type of lewd-looking parsnip that used to appear on *That's Life*.

Inga Phipps was advised to go organic by her doctor after a serious illness. She still buys additive-free food at markets, but gave up on home-delivered veggie boxes owing to their indifferent quality. "I didn't expect the food to be nicely polished but I expected it to be edible," she says. "It was all a bit manky and mouldy, and you could have tied the carrots in a knot. It just wasn't good value for money. The last straw was when I ordered a 5lb box of fruit, most of which was taken up by a very heavy coconut."

The highly perishable nature of organic produce is not helped by the fact that so little is grown locally. Most organic carrots bought in Britain are grown in Denmark, Holland and Israel; overall Britain imports 70 per cent of its organic food. "If more produce were home-grown that would certainly help to bring down the price," suggests Elliott. "Yes, the market is tiny, but if British farmers get their act to-

gether, there is huge potential." So far, however, our farmers are reluctant to rise to the challenge. Of the UK's 150,000 farms, just 0.5 per cent are registered as organic.

Earlier this year, the Government increased its Organic Aid Scheme - the subsidy it pays farmers to encourage conversions from chemical methods - by a hefty 80 per cent, a tacit admission that the organic movement has stalled.

entrepreneurs who are making a good living from the green economy. The couple, both of whom are in their mid-thirties, met at agricultural college and farmed a Yorkshire small-holding before moving to Manor Farm four years ago. "My father was a mathematician which helped us a great deal - we didn't have the heavy weight of coming from farming families," says Matravels, slipping on his Wellington boots to show

sidies making it more profitable to continue growing chemical crops than setting the land aside, it is hardly surprising that most farmers opt for the status quo.

"Most of them are so used to a chemical way of production that they can't accept you can do it with out," says Matravels. "The biggest reason why the organic movement has failed to take off is that farmers are so stuck in their ways."

So far, Manor Farm is a bountiful anomaly in an otherwise bleak landscape. Walk its fields and you will see skylarks nesting in restored meadows and carpets of red clover naturally enriching the soil. But peer over the hedge into the neighbouring farm and you find the true face of British farming: scarred fields sprayed with organophosphates and devoid of wildlife.

There is hope, however. Across from the farmhouse, the Matravels have converted a granary into a classroom to accommodate parties of local schoolchildren who visit the fields of wheat, barley and free-range livestock, learning the virtues of crop rotation and sustainable, organic agriculture. Vivienne Matravels is optimistic. "There is a lot of interest from younger people in the organic lifestyle," she says. "We are in a transitional phase and it may take some time for attitudes to change completely. But hopefully our children will be the ones to make it reach fruition."

'Although it is a better quality product, the price is certainly prohibitive to some people - that's why the market is still so small'

'The biggest reason why the organic movement has failed to take off is that farmers are so stuck in their ways'

I want to mourn my mother, not Diana

WHAT VIRGINIA SAYS

There is very little Tina can do, except perhaps kick herself for arranging the funeral on the same day as that of Diana, Princess of Wales, which is a fairly pointless way of spending the time. But perhaps it may help her to remember that fury and impotence are common symptoms of bereavement, and it's quite likely that if she were not feeling enraged about the Diana publicity she would be venting her anger somewhere else - on the doctors who attended her mother, on a family member, or even on her mother, for dying. Diana's death is just a focus for completely natural feelings that would pop up somewhere, whatever had happened.

Look what happened to the people of the nation, after all. They needed something to vent their anger and impotence on and they picked the Queen and the Royal Family as their scapegoats, furious that none of them had come to see them, angry that the flag on Buckingham Palace was not at half-mast, shocked that the Queen had not addressed the nation, and so on.

And witness Diana's brother Charles, who vented his own anger on the press and the paparazzi, and was so enraged that he took the opportunity to let out his rage from the Westminster Abbey pulpit. As

far as a funeral goes, there is often something about it that drives one wild with fury, too. When my mother died I was livid that the vicar referred to her as "Janet", which was on her death certificate, instead of "Janey", the name by which she was known.

When my father died I was appalled at the rudeness of the vicar, who never came and shook hands after the service, but scampered away immediately on his bicycle to visit the sick.

At my father's memorial service I was seething and miserable because my mother was not mentioned at all when his life was celebrated.

Normally I could not care less about things like this, but because anger is often sizzling very near the surface after a death, it is quite common for people to find something in a funeral to get enraged and offended by.

And is Tina really sure that people didn't come to her mother's funeral because of Diana's funeral on the same day?

Some people must have come, surely, and perhaps the others would not have come anyway. It is unlikely that they were all glued to their televisions, unless they were totally inhuman.

Perhaps Tina felt cheated of some kind of grieving process when the whole nation was in mourning

last year. Interestingly, the national association for the bereaved, Cruse, found that during the big Diana gloom, phone calls to them dropped markedly. It was as if everyone was suddenly permitted to grieve, and did not need to get hold of a counselling agency to say it was OK.

So it is not surprising that Tina felt that her own bereavement was overshadowed by everyone else's. It is obvious that many people who were apparently grieving for Diana were in fact grieving for their own personal losses in the past, and Tina was deprived of one of the only perks of bereavement - that of feeling special. Normally, when you are bereaved everyone's attitude to you changes; you are treated with kid gloves and cared for like a china doll.

Tina must have missed out a lot on that, with everyone crying about the Princess.

As for all the publicity, is Tina worried that it will remind her each year of her mother's death when she really wants to try to forget? The sad truth is that one rarely forgets, and on anniversaries of deaths all the old feelings often return for a few days.

Long after Diana's death is forgotten in the media - which it will be - it is likely that Tina will still be hit by pangs of fury, sadness and impotence.

DILEMMAS



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Tina's mother died on the same day as Diana and very few people came to the funeral, as it was also on the same day as Diana's. Tina has found it hard to cope with the anniversary publicity and dreads it happening year after year. She feels furious and impotent. What can she do?

It was my worst week. Like Tina, but unlike Tina, my personal experience of the two weekends involving Diana's death and funeral was traumatic. The first weekend, I should have been arranging a joint holiday. Instead, I told my deceiving husband to visit his transatlantic girlfriend, who had been blighting our life for many years, and sort himself out. By the following weekend he had booked a holiday with her. He duly left me and our two children. I am not ashamed to admit I was mourning a 20-year marriage, not the Princess.

SUE Bedford

The pain will subside. When my own mother died, I felt such overwhelming anger and frustration that I thought I could not bear it, but it did pass gradually. The fact that your mother's death and funeral coincided

with that of Princess Diana is nothing more than an unfortunate and painful coincidence. Whatever date it had been would be remembered by you with pain.

The process of grieving is complex and individual, but usually follows a pattern, from stunned disbelief

through anger to eventual acceptance, when you can look back with pleasure at shared memories, even if you do not believe this now.

Take one day at a time, talk about her to your friends and other family members. Look at photographs, talk to her out loud if it feels better, maybe visiting

places you both enjoyed. The pain does subside, and pleasant memories take its place. MRS B BARNES Bournemouth, Dorset

Choose another date. My mother was an amusing, gregarious, 64-year-old grandmother of six when she died suddenly, five years ago, on 31 August.

Taking into account that 31 August will always be devoted to Diana for reflective soul-searching, I made 29 August my mother's day for visiting her memorial and thinking of her peacefully. On 31 August I didn't read any paper, watch TV or listen to the radio, so the coverage didn't intrude into my thoughts. There will never be a 31 August now that will not mention Diana. For those of us who have more personal tributes to bear, we will just have to make our own arrangements. EDWINA LARNER Bath

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, I've lived with my mother since I was 10, when my parents split up. She's a lovely mum, but now I'm 16 she's taken to coming out with me and my mates. They all like her, as she can be really good fun. But she borrows my clothes, and comes out to clubs and gets drunk sometimes, and people say we're like sisters. She's also very attractive and flirts a lot. I didn't mind at first, but now I'm getting really brought down by it. I don't seem to have any private life. What can I do? Gina

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from *Insidea*. Send comments and dilemmas to *Virginia Ironside, Features Department, 'The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4DL, fax: 0171-293 2182, or e-mail: dilemmas@independent.co.uk - giving your postal address for sending a bouquet.*



Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, who wants to be mayor of London, being made an honorary pearly king in Lambeth yesterday in recognition of the millions he has raised for charity over 20 years
Tom Pilsdon

Thousands given wrong GCSE grade

BETWEEN SIX and seven thousand teenagers have been given the wrong GCSE results because of a computer error.

The mistake means that the pupils, who sat science or humanities modular exams with the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board, could now receive higher grades.

New results will be issued tomorrow. The board said that no one would receive a poorer grade but some might receive one grade higher than their original mark.

Peter Dawson, the board's assistant chief executive, said the errors came to light when appeals against the results started to come in from schools.

The exams in question have three components: coursework, tests for modules throughout the course and final, externally marked tests worth a quarter of the total marks.

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Problems arose because new software introduced this year did not aggregate the test scores properly.

Mr Dawson said: "There was nothing at all wrong with the marking. It was a computer error."

No more than 5 per cent of the 130,000 candidates who took the exams are expected to be affected.

One school involved is the Ridings School in Halifax. Anna White, the head who took over after the school closed during a discipline crisis two years ago, said she was surprised by the results of some able pupils.

"We knew there was something wrong and we were prepared to put our necks out and do something about it."

The pupils don't expect the

exam boards to make a mistake and it has been quite a traumatic time for the school and for the science staff.

Record numbers of A-level candidates have applied to university after receiving their results despite the introduction of £1,000-a-year tuition fees, figures released yesterday by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) show.

The figure for last-minute applications through the clearing process, which matches applicants to unfilled university places, is even higher than last year when students rushed to join courses to avoid paying fees this autumn.

Tony Higgins, Ucas's chief executive, said: "The increase in people applying since receiving A-level results reflects the overall improvement in A-level grades but it also shows

they are not being put off by fees. It is particularly impressive as last year was a record year for late applications."

This year there have been 9,069 new applications compared with 8,766 last year.

Yesterday's figures also show that the number of Malaysian applicants has more than halved after the fall in value of the Malaysian currency and the removal of tax relief for parents sending children overseas.

The president of Oxford University students' union has been expelled for allegedly cheating in her exams.

Katherine Rainwood, 22, who read politics, philosophy and economics at St Hilda's College, is understood to be preparing to appeal against the decision. She was elected president on a "Labour students against tuition fees" slate.

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Blunkett praises his own work

TEACHERS IN England have been sent a back-to-school message from David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, thanking them for their help and outlining the Government's achievements.

But heads and teachers said yesterday that the jury was still out on the effect of the reforms introduced since the Government took office.

And they warned that higher salaries for teachers and more money for schools, not a succession of headline-grabbing initiatives, were the key to raising standards. The Conservatives said the letter was "an expensive gimmick".

The Department for Education said originally that a letter was being sent to every teacher, but later admitted that letters had gone to head teachers with a request that the message be passed on.

Schools face a series of changes this academic year. They include testing for all five-year-olds, a "literacy hour" to improve reading and education action zones to raise standards in underachieving schools. A new teacher-training curriculum for primary teachers is also in place and next week sees the start of the National Year of Reading.

Mr Blunkett, who announced a further £560m over three years, to reduce infant class sizes, says that there are 100,000 fewer infants in classes of under 30 this term. Overall, he says, the Government is

BY JUDITH JUDD

spending an extra 5.1 per cent on education in real terms over the next three years.

He looks forward to the publication of a Green Paper on the profession later this year. "This will recognise the vital role of teachers and offer an historic opportunity to put an end to 20 years of drift and declining morale. It will set out our vision of a profession equipped to meet the demands of the 21st century and ready to reclaim its rightful status in society."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "We have seen more initiatives under this Government in the last year-and-a-half than we did under the previous government in 19 years."

"I have no doubt that they have a part to play, but the bottom line is, 'Have we got teachers of the right quality in the classroom and heads with the right leadership skills?'"

John Dunford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "In terms of the feel-good factor, a personal letter from the Secretary of State is helpful, but you still have to feel that the extra money is actually getting into your classroom. That isn't the case in all schools."

Damian Green, Tory education spokesman, said: "This is another example of the money-wasting tendencies of the Government's army of spin doctors."

BSE inquiry told of ministry error

MOVES TO introduce a computerised registry of British cattle seven years ago were blocked by the Ministry of Agriculture, even though it could have shortened the BSE epidemic and helped to track diseased cattle, a former civil servant disclosed yesterday.

Paul Bunyan, who was chief scientific adviser at the ministry, told the BSE inquiry in London that in February 1991 he backed moves to introduce a National Cattle Data Centre, which would have recorded cattle ancestry, milk yields and any genetic evaluation.

Such a system would have simplified the problem of finding the calves of cattle that subsequently developed "mad cow disease". Tracking down such cattle has been a key aim of the culling procedures suggested to curb BSE. But without computerised records, it is a hit-and-miss affair.

Computer records would also have helped to reduce fraud claimed on milk subsidies.

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

and possibly improved the cattle stock through genetic data - which might also have helped scientists studying BSE.

The ministry rejected the idea despite a parallel recommendation from the Wilson committee - set up earlier that year by the Milk Marketing Board and the National Cattle Breeders Association.

"The approach was subsequently adopted in Northern Ireland, with demonstrable recent benefit to their export trade," Mr Bunyan told the inquiry. The Ulster system played a key part in winning the confidence of the European Union that the province was BSE-free earlier this year, because it showed that the calves of BSE-infected cows had been culled.

The inquiry is expected to continue until next March, with a report by its chairman, Lord Justice Phillips, to be delivered in June 1999.

HAMISH MCRAE

'Voters clearly like politicians to appear unstuffy, approachable, slick - and ideally to have a good head of hair'

THURSDAY REVIEW, PAGE 3

FILM

Killing time killing Nazis

THE BIG PICTURE



RYAN GILBEY

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)
DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG
170 MINS
STARRING TOM HANKS
AND TOM SZIMORE

Saving Private Ryan tells the story of an eight-man mission to locate and rescue a single soldier out of the thousands scattered behind enemy lines in the Second World War, and it has the notable distinction of featuring a career-best performance from the actor Tom Hanks, though it is unlikely that the film will be defined by this in the minds of those who see it. What will be branded on the memory are a pair of visceral, devastating 25-minute battle sequences by which the movie is bookended. Or rather, almost bookended.

What actually opens and closes the film are modern-day scenes – an elderly war veteran trooping to a cemetery with two successive generations of family in tow, his children pious, his grandchildren respectfully furrowing their brows. It's less a case of the film introducing itself, than Spielberg announcing his ideal audience profile.

This kind of contextualising is nothing more than an inexperienced screenwriter's way of justifying the story which is about to be told. The device didn't work when Ken Loach employed it in *Land and Freedom*, though he had the defence that the Spanish Civil War still retained a degree of obscurity. You may feel less secure placing yourself in the hands of a film-maker who structures his movie to accommodate those members of the audience who are a bit fuzzy about that Second World War business. In its opening and closing minutes, *Saving Private Ryan* offers a reminder that the freedom you take for granted today was secured by conflicts resolved half a century ago. Funny that we couldn't be trusted to detect these resonances unassisted. Funny that the tale couldn't simply be told.

Saving Private Ryan is a film of interesting if contrived contrasts. One of the most pointed examples may be purely coincidental. As the Allied troops disembark on Omaha



Effortless power: some of Tom Hanks's (right) best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness

beach, the camera drifts underwater where a single bullet passes through the bodies of two soldiers. You can't shake the echo of an identical scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*: that film was set in the Second World War as well, but back then the violence was fun; the stray bullet provoked laughs, not gasps. It's a telling lesson in the choreography of context – the same director, the same act of violence even, orchestrated to achieve entirely different results. Not for the first time, you may have a sense of Spielberg wrestling with his own inflexible image.

For most of the film, though, he is wrestling with an inflexible screenplay. The combat footage which Spielberg shoots is an attempt to create as close to a subjective, unstructured viewpoint as is humanly possible when you're lugging cameras around in the mud and then pruning the results down to the

last millisecond in the comfort of your editing suite. What the screenwriter Robert Rodat has created is a piece of work which achieves the opposite effect. It is a model of organisation. Which would be just dandy if the film didn't begin by expressing a desire to articulate the chaos of war. Sure, bullets fly out of thin air and you're as likely to be killed by a bomb that you are attempting to plant as by a wily German sniper. But nothing else about life during wartime is so arbitrary.

Did you know, for example, that squads were comprised of one member from each of the various personality groups? The team which Captain John Miller (Hanks) is left with after the massacre at Omaha Beach is a good example. There is the gruff Ernest Borgnine bulldog (Tom Sizemore). The cheeky Brooklyn wide-boy (Edward Burns). The intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone respects (Giovanni Ribisi)

and the intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone ridicules because he hasn't learned to kill yet (Jeremy Davies). But don't worry. He will.

Rodat doesn't really go in for characterisation. In its place, everyone gets a story to tell, most of the stories expressing unexpected sensitivity, philosophical depth and sturdy heterosexuality, often all at the same time. It may be the single brilliant stroke of the script to deny that privilege to Miller. As the soldiers kill time, waiting for Nazi tanks to roll over the bridge which they have crammed with explosives, Miller mentions something which brings him happiness: the thought of his wife, pruning the garden. "Tell me about your wife and those rosebushes," someone asks. "No," Miller says quietly but firmly. "That one I save just for me."

Hanks may be one of the only actors who could carry off a role as predictably righteous as Captain Miller

and still suggest that there are parts of him no one will ever get to see. It helps that his face is starting to age and crease – his skin looks as rumpled and tattered as his uniform. And yet he can still draw on that boyish, flashing grin when he needs to. Some of his best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness – when he witnesses two soldiers gunning down a German prisoner, you can't be sure exactly where his evident sympathies are directed.

The effortless power of Hanks's work provides another welcome contrast, underlining the clumsiness of Spielberg's manipulative techniques, which grow steadily less sophisticated with each film he makes. The clash between the battle sequences in *Saving Private Ryan* and the material in between is jarring and unhappy, and it comes very suddenly with a single camera movement and a murmur of John

Williams's mournful score. After the indiscriminate carnage on Omaha Beach, the camera stops juddering and starts sweeping gracefully across the bodies lapped by the rusty-red waves, finally settling on the kitbag of a dead soldier – Pvt Ryan. From there, the film goes on to reveal that only one of the four Ryan brothers remains alive, and Captain Miller and his squad are dispatched to find him as bugles start tooting on the soundtrack, and you realise that the opening burst of formalist daring was only there to lull you into a false sense of insecurity.

It isn't the explicit violence of the opening section which is shocking – anyone who braved the Vietnam scenes of the Hughes Brothers' *Dead Presidents* is unlikely to experience peristalsis at the sight of a heap of unspooled intestines. Rather, the relentless motion of the camera, and Spielberg's disregard for visual and aural coherence, are

more unsettling than any of the atrocities that he stages.

There are juxtapositions here which are the work of a great craftsman – between the dispassionate typists coldly bashing out tragic telegrams, and the sensitive voiceover reading their contents; between the gruff, bulky soldiers slouching around a gramophone, and the fragility of the Edith Piaf record which is being played on it; between the tragedy of your friends losing their legs and the urgency with which you must remove their amputation and leave them for dead. But a director who switches so cleanly between two disparate styles can easily appear disloyal to both. It may be that the film's tentative, non-committal closing image – a gossamer-thin American flag rendered grey and bloodless by the sun blazing through its fabric – says more about Spielberg than anything in the preceding three hours.

ALSO SHOWING

LA VIE DE JESUS (NC) BRUNO DUMONT ■ **COUSIN BETTE (15)** DES MCANUFF
■ **BABYMOOTHER (15)** JULIAN HENRIQUES

THE UNBLINKING, blank-eyed coolness of Bruno Dumont's *La Vie de Jesus* is mirrored in the inscrutable face of the film's main character. Freddy (David Douche) is 20 years old, with a face like a Yorkshire pudding of at least three times that age. He lives in Bailleul, a town in northern France where a chip paper blowing along the road counts as big news. His passions, if that face could ever be said to express passion about anything, are his motorbike (which he crashes at least once a day), his chaffinch (which he enters in bizarre Sunday afternoon trilling contests), and his girlfriend Marie (Marjorie Cottreel). Freddy and Marie don't do much: they walk up and down the street, or make love. Sometimes, after sex, Marie even gets to ride pillion on Freddy's bike. They are small fish in a small pond.

Dumont's first feature comes on like *Los Olvidados* on downers, though it is largely free of even the most cosmetic editorialising present in Bunuel's film. The camera explicitly directs our focus only once, when we meet Freddy and his biking pals gathered around the bed of a friend who is dying of AIDS. During the scene, we are guided toward a picture of Lazarus on the wall, which might sound incongruous but resonates sadly against the film's barren landscape, where the only miracle would be if Freddy got through the day without falling off his bike. In fact, Lazarus is a reference to the film's title, borrowed from Ernest Renan, whose writing strove to demythologise Christ by rendering him as human. Dumont plugs into the mood of Renan's work; the characters are earthy and even ugly, with ripples of racism providing the only focus in their lives, but there is a plain sanctity in his depiction of



A film on heat: The real star of 'Baby Mother' is the costume designer

them which approaches the essence of compassionate film-making.

The picture neatly underlines the boredom of Freddy and his pals with grim humour. What do you do when you're growing up in Nowheresville? You play in the marching band. You squirt around on your piddly motorbike. You sit in parked cars and sing. Dumont has captured this world with painful accuracy. The combination of impassive camerawork and a cast of beautifully unselfconscious non-

professionals gives the picture a raw tenderness that is quite breathtaking. And the attention to detail can really sting – Marie's delicate bird-shaped earrings, or the spattered faces of boys who have spent their afternoons spray-painting cars. But then maybe that's just because I'm from Essex, where you really aren't anyone at all until you get your first signet ring and speeding fine.

There isn't any substance to the comedy *Cousin Bette*, set in 19th century France and adapted from

the novel by Balzac, though as a frothy confection it can't be faulted. Jessica Lange plays the title character, a spinster who slips into the role of benefactor to a feral young sculptor (Aden Young). But in pursuing both validation and love from the boy, Bette inadvertently begins a chain of jealousy and betrayal that implicates everyone she knows, from her late cousin's vain husband (a very funny, very poignant Hugh Laurie) to a rapacious actress (Elisabeth Shue).

It may be disappointing that the film doesn't exploit more than just the usual trappings of the costume drama, but then there is still a lot to be said for heaving bosoms, ostentatious embroidery and the sight of British character actors twiddling stringy mustaches and being crisply bitely to one another. Although the staging can be flat, the director, Des McAnuff, keeps the picture rattling along with sufficient pace and flair to evoke favourable comparisons with Richard Lester. It is the presence of Jessica Lange, though, which gives *Cousin Bette* its alluring glimmer. With her deep, molasses eyes and purring voice, she is perfect as the scheming spider who gets stuck in her own web. Some trick to make malevolence this seductive.

The British reggae musical *Baby Mother* is vibrant and delightful, and you wouldn't expect to find those words associated with something set in Harlesden. A "baby mother" is a parent who is still practically a child herself; the film's heroine (Anjela Lauren Smith) is just such a woman, and a would-be reggae star to boot – if only she could find a way to negotiate child-care and the interference of a calculating boyfriend. Despite its gritty tone, the picture buzzes with vitality and colour, often literally: it sometimes appears that the film stock has been splashed with Day-Glo paint. Indeed, the movie's real star is the costume designer Annie Curtis Jones, who loads up the cast with electric blue wigs, feather boas, plastic separates and gold chains as thick as arms. Crucially, the robust, sexy songs can make you tingle. This film is on heat.

All films on release from tomorrow

RG

VIDEO WATCH

MIKE HIGGINS

Chasing Amy (tbc), available to rent now

The concluding instalment of Kevin Smith's loose New Jersey trilogy is an honourable attempt to scale the profane heights that *Clerks* reached and its successor, *Mall Rats*, so conspicuously failed to. Once again, Smith focuses on a trio of intelligent, sharp but cynically parochial twentysomethings who refer to the universe beyond their suburban lives only when they need to give their jokes a bit of worldly breadth.

Plot is only useful in so much as it presents his characters a new topic for ironic deconstruction. So it is when Alyssa (Joey Lauren Adams), a bisexual comic book author, falls for fellow writer Holden (Ben Affleck), to the chagrin of his partner and best friend, Banksy (Jason Lee). In terms of bringing any depth to the characters, though, Smith's handling of Holden's tempestuous affair with Alyssa and Banksy's neanderthal response to it is one-dimensional. Smith seems to think male emotional immaturity is both hilarious (which it is) and an irreversible state of affairs (which it isn't), and uses Alyssa to prove his comic book thesis.

Amistad (15), available to rent from tomorrow

In case the blood-spattered first reel of *Saving Private Ryan* seems out of character for Steven Spielberg, here's an earlier film of his with a similarly gruesome opening sequence, in which 44 enslaved

Africans aboard the eponymous ship slip their chains and kill almost all their captors.

While abolitionists Theodore Joseph (Morgan Freeman) and Louis Taplin (Stellan Skarsgård) team up with huckster property lawyer (Matthew McConaughey) to secure the Africans' freedom, Spielberg shackles the narrative to the tale of their enslavement and transport across the Atlantic, as recounted by Cinque (Djimon Hounsou).

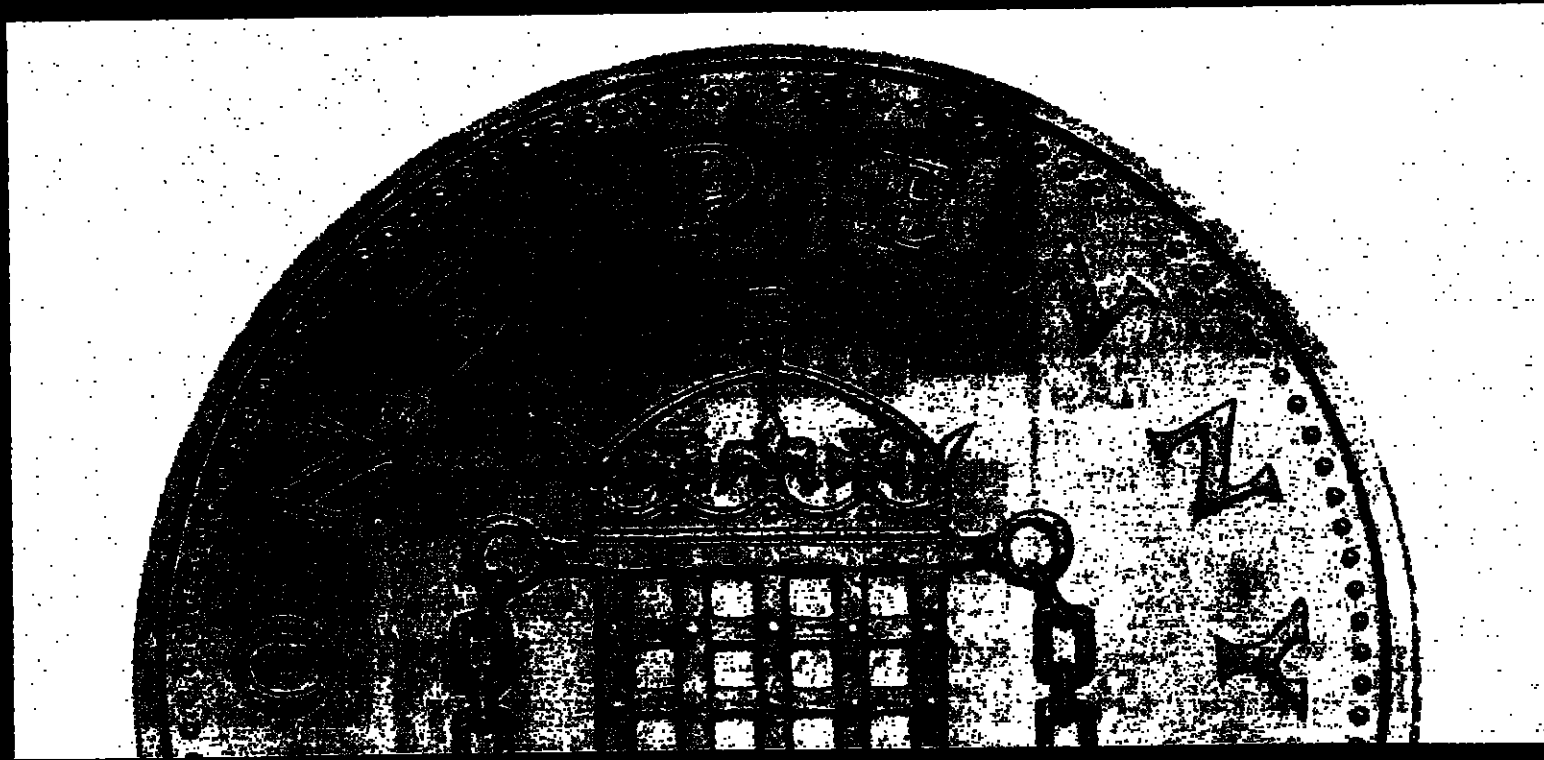
Spielberg is also unhappy with the ugly nature of the dispute on which the slaves' freedom rests – are they the property of the Queen of Spain, the surviving crew of *La Amistad* or the naval officers who "salvaged" them? The equivalent ethical ambiguity in *Schindler's List* had a face, Liam Neeson's. Here, it's the less attractive facade of the US political system and its expediency.

Desperate Measures (18), available to rent from Monday

Imagine *Children's Hospital* meets *The Silence of the Lambs* with a first-rate cast. Andy Garcia is a San Francisco police officer who discovers that homicidal sociopath, Michael Keaton, is the only person able to provide the bone marrow his dying son needs. When Keaton inevitably escapes in the hospital, Garcia has to ensure that Keaton isn't killed in the pursuit, rendering the bone marrow useless. To their eternal shame, Garcia and Brian Cox, as his boss, play this ludicrous mess straight.

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House leaders ponder Clinton's trial

MEMBERS OF Congress met yesterday to prepare the path that could remove Bill Clinton from the White House through the extraordinary process of a senate impeachment trial.

The meeting showed that after eight months of investigation, the inquiry led by Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel, is about to emerge from the closed rooms of the grand jury into the political spotlight.

Newt Gingrich and Dick Gephardt, the leading Republican and Democrat in the House of Representatives, met colleagues who would play key roles in any impeachment. The

aim was to broker differences between the parties over how the Starr report will be handled. "Any impeachment cannot succeed unless it is done in bipartisan or nonpartisan way," said Henry Hyde, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who would play a big role in impeachment proceedings.

Mr Clinton tried yesterday to shore up his support in Congress, meeting House Democrats and once again apologising for his behaviour. Speculation is rife in Washington that he will apologise in some form at a

prayer meeting in Washington tomorrow, and that he may even accept the need for some punishment such as a congressional censure, as long as it is done rapidly.

That is unlikely to wash. Even some of Mr Clinton's own party, including Senator Patrick Moynihan, want impeachment proceedings to go ahead. Mr Clinton's efforts to get early access to the Starr report in time to write a response have also been stymied. The President has "sown the wind" and now he is "reaping the whirlwind", Democrat Robert Byrd, a former senate majority leader said yesterday. "Talk of

impeachment is in the air." That talk will turn to action in the next few days. Mr Starr was expected to tell Mr Gingrich, the Speaker of the House, that his report is complete and ready to be sent to Congress.

Under the constitution, it is the House of Representatives, the lower house of Congress - which has a Republican majority - that deals with the first stage of impeachment, equivalent to that of the grand jury. Once Mr Starr has done that, the House Rules Committee must agree a resolution that empowers the Judiciary Committee to set up procedures for hearings.

There is little practical experience in running an operation like that. Though impeachment hearings were held for President Richard Nixon, that was decades ago. The key issues that have emerged as problems are the ability of the Judiciary Committee to use its powers to compel people to give testimony, the dissemination of the report, and the involvement of Democrats as well as Republicans in planning any hearings.

Yesterday's meeting was requested by Mr Gephardt after he became worried that Democrats were being excluded. "Obviously dealing with this re-

port must be done in a truly bipartisan manner," a spokesman said. "He had concerns that Democrats weren't included."

The Starr report, which grew out of the Whitewater investments affair will examine charges for which Mr Clinton might be impeached, including lying under oath in his deposition for the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit, seeking to conceal his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, obstruction of justice by persuading her to conceal it and impeding the investigation into the relationship.

Any or all of those accusations could be true; but that

does not mean that they are necessarily crimes, or that they are impeachable offences. However, the committee has yet to agree on what, precisely, constitutes "high crimes and misdemeanours", for which the constitution prescribes impeachment.

Once those definitional and procedural questions have been decided, the House Judiciary Committee, or more likely, a sub-committee, could hold its own hearings. Congress is due to sit only for another six weeks before it breaks for the mid-term elections in November, returning in January. It seems unlikely that any

hearings could be completed in that time, so an inquiry could stretch into the beginning of next year. The Judiciary Committee must then decide whether to recommend impeachment. That would be voted upon by the whole House and, if it agrees to impeachment, Mr Clinton would then be tried in front of the whole Senate, presided over by William Rehnquist, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Mr Nixon resigned once impeachment had been recommended; President Andrew Jackson was impeached and went for trial, but was later cleared by the Senate.



Bill Clinton looks back as he steps on to a helicopter for a flight from the White House to meet Democratic fund-raisers in Florida. Reuters

Americans in fear of 'bounty' killers

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

THE UNITED STATES has issued a fresh security alert to its embassies and citizens around the world because of urgent concern that Osama bin Laden, accused by Washington of mounting terrorist attacks against US embassies, may be offering bounties to assassins who kill Americans.

A specific warning, meanwhile, was issued yesterday for American citizens in Lebanon to exercise the "highest level of caution" after the embassy in Beirut received intelligence that its compound may be the target of an attack similar to the twin bombings on 7 August of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

There is anxiety in Washington that Mr bin Laden may be plotting assaults against the US in retaliation for August's missile strikes against his training camp in Afghanistan, as well as the air strike on a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, that Washington described as punishment for the embassy bombings in East Africa, which killed 253 and wounded over 5,000.

Suggestions about bounties first surfaced in a Pakistan newspaper the day after the US missile strikes: it reported that Mr bin Laden was offering



Bin Laden: New concern

\$10,000 for each American life.

A blanket warning from the State Department last Friday, warned: "Americans should maintain a very low profile, vary routes and times for all required travel and treat mail from unfamiliar sources with suspicion". Several US firms have issued similar instructions to executives overseas.

While none has been confirmed by US intelligence, rumours have swirled for days that Mr bin Laden has offered bounties worth \$10,000 for each American assassinated by his followers. "We don't know if it's true," one official said.

"Our worldwide caution is not based on that. We just wanted to let people know the threat continued," the official added.

The American embassy alert in Beirut was reported in a statement from Lebanon's official National News Agency. The embassy, it said, had "advised all Americans living in Lebanon to be cautious, after the US government received information about the possibility of an attack".

While embassy staff said they had no specific intelligence about such an attack, nervousness was heightened by memories of April 1983, when, at the height of Lebanon's civil war, a suicide car bomber killed 62 people at the compound.

Meanwhile, apparent flaws in the security at the Nairobi embassy are likely to spur controversy in Washington. The New York Times yesterday reported that the driver of the bomb car had easy access to parking next to the embassy that was shared with a commercial bank next door. The area was protected by local guards, earning just \$100 a month and patrolling unarmed.

The security gap had remained uncorrected in spite of warnings about it to Washington from the US ambassador, Prudence Bushnell.

The State Department is asking Congress for an extra \$3bn to turn its embassies all over the world into virtual fortresses.

Dialogue of death on doomed Swiss plane

THE LAST words of the crew of the Swissair jet that plunged into the sea off Nova Scotia show them facing increasing problems as the aircraft systems closed down.

The aircraft appears to have suffered an electrical failure, cutting off the flight-data recorder six minutes before the crash.

The last words on the transcript are from the air-traffic controller: "You're cleared to start the fuel dump", by which time the plane was plunging out of control.

The following are excerpts from a complete transcript of the final conversations on 2 September involving Swissair flight 111 and air-traffic control centres in Moncton, New Brunswick, and Halifax.

9:58.15 EDT (1:58.15 BST), Swissair 111: Moncton Centre, Swissair one-one-one heavy (a term for a wide-bodied plane) good, uh, evening, level three-three-zero (flying level at 33,000 feet).

9:58.20, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven heavy, Moncton Centre, good evening. Reports of occasional light turbulence at all levels.

10:14.18, Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy is declaring Pan Pan Pan (term for an urgent message, short of a distress call). We have, uh, smoke in the cockpit. Uh, request immediate return, uh, to a convenient place, I guess, uh, Boston.

10:14.33, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger ... turn right proceed ... uh ... you say to Boston you want to go?

10:14.33, Swissair 111: I guess Boston ... we need first the weather, so, uh, we start a right turn here. Swissair one-one-one heavy.

10:14.45, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger, and a descent to flight level three-zero-zero (31,000 feet). Is that OK?

10:14.50, Swissair 111: Three-one-zero. [Unintelligible words obscured by a noise, possibly associated with donning oxygen masks.] Three-one-zero ... one-one heavy.

10:15.08, Moncton controller: Uh, would you prefer to go into Halifax?

10:15.11, Swissair 111: Uh, stand by.

10:15.28, Swissair 111: Affirmative for Swissair one-eleven heavy. We prefer Halifax from our position.

10:15.43, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger. Proceed direct to Halifax. Descend now to flight level two-nine-zero (29,000 feet).

10:15.58, British Airways 214: And, uh, Swissair one-eleven heavy, from Speedbird (British Airways flight) two-one-four, I can give you the Halifax weather if you like.

10:16.04, Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy, we have the, uh, the oxygen mask on. Go ahead with the weather.

10:19.14, Halifax controller: OK, can I vector (direct) you, uh, to set up for runway zero-six at Halifax?

10:19.19, Swissair 111: Ah, say again latest wind, please.

10:19.22, Halifax controller: OK, active runway Halifax zero-six. Should I start you on a vector for six?

10:19.26, Swissair 111: Yes, uh, vector for six will be fine. Swissair one-eleven heavy.

10:19.39, Halifax controller: OK, it's a back-course approach for runway zero-six (the runway has a "localiser" radio signal that shows the runway's location, but the system does not automatically show the pilot the precise descent angle). The localiser frequency one-zero-nine-decimal-nine. You've got 30 miles to fly to the threshold.

10:19.53, Swissair 111: Uh, we need more than thirty miles.

10:21.23, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, when you



Urs Zimmermann, captain of the Swissair plane

advertently broadcast on the air? Du bist emergency checklist for air-conditioning smoke? [Translation: You are in the emergency checklist for air-conditioning smoke?]

10:24.28, Swissair 111: [Background phone]. Ah, Swissair one-eleven.

At the time we must fly, ah, manually. Are we cleared to fly between, ah, ten thousand and nine thousand feet? [Sound of audible signal when the autopilot is switched on.]

10:24.45, Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy is declaring emergency.

10:24.56, Swissair 111: Eleven heavy, we starting dump now, we have to land immediate.

10:25.00, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, just a couple of miles, I'll be right with you.

10:25.19, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, you are cleared to, ah, commence your fuel dump on that track (while maintaining your present direction) and advise me, ah, when the dump is complete.

10:25.43, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, check you're cleared to start the fuel dump.

No further communications were heard from the Swissair plane. It disappeared from radar screens about six minutes later.

The first law suit arising from the crash was brought in New York yesterday by Jake La Motta, the former middleweight boxer played by Robert De Niro in the film *Raging Bull*.

His son, Joseph, was killed in the crash. Defendants in the suit include Swissair and Delta Airlines, McDonnell Douglas, which manufactured the MD-11 plane, and Boeing, which now owns McDonnell Douglas.

The law suit alleges the crash was caused by "electrical, mechanical and/or structural failure."

A Scotland/Edinburgh Company

Dialogue of death on doomed Swiss plane

THE LAST words of the crew of the Swissair jet that plunged into the sea off Nova Scotia show them facing increasing problems as the aircraft systems closed down.

The aircraft appears to have suffered an electrical failure, cutting off the flight-data recorder six minutes before the crash.

The last words on the transcript are from the air-traffic controller: "You're cleared to start the fuel dump", by which time the plane was plunging out of control.

The following are excerpts from a complete transcript of the final conversations on 2 September involving Swissair flight 111 and air-traffic control centres in Moncton, New Brunswick, and Halifax.

9:58.15 EDT (1:58.15 BST), Swissair 111: Moncton Centre, Swissair one-one-one heavy (a term for a wide-bodied plane) good, uh, evening, level three-three-zero (flying level at 33,000 feet).

9:58.20, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven heavy, Moncton Centre, good evening. Reports of occasional light turbulence at all levels.

10:14.18, Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy is declaring Pan Pan Pan (term for an urgent message, short of a distress call). We have, uh, smoke in the cockpit. Uh, request immediate return, uh, to a convenient place, I guess, uh, Boston.

10:14.33, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger ... turn right proceed ... uh ... you say to Boston you want to go?

10:14.33, Swissair 111: I guess Boston ... we need first the weather, so, uh, we start a right turn here. Swissair one-one-one heavy.

10:14.45, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger, and a descent to flight level three-zero-zero (31,000 feet). Is that OK?

10:14.50, Swissair 111: Three-one-zero. [Unintelligible words obscured by a noise, possibly associated with donning oxygen masks.] Three-one-zero ... one-one heavy.

10:15.08, Moncton controller: Uh, would you prefer to go into Halifax?

10:15.11, Swissair 111: Uh, stand by.

10:15.28, Swissair 111: Affirmative for Swissair one-eleven heavy. We prefer Halifax from our position.

10:15.43, Moncton controller: Swissair one-eleven, roger. Proceed direct to Halifax. Descend now to flight level two-nine-zero (29,000 feet).

10:15.58, British Airways 214: And, uh, Swissair one-eleven heavy, from Speedbird (British Airways flight) two-one-four, I can give you the Halifax weather if you like.

10:16.04, Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy, we have the, uh, the oxygen mask on. Go ahead with the weather.

10:19.14, Halifax controller: OK, can I vector (direct) you, uh, to set up for runway zero-six at Halifax?

10:19.19, Swissair 111: Ah, say again latest wind, please.

10:19.22, Halifax controller: OK, active runway Halifax zero-six. Should I start you on a vector for six?

10:19.26, Swissair 111: Yes, uh, vector for six will be fine. Swissair one-eleven heavy.

10:19.39, Halifax controller: OK, it's a back-course approach for runway zero-six (the runway has a "localiser" radio signal that shows the runway's location, but the system does not automatically show the pilot the precise descent angle). The localiser frequency one-zero-nine-decimal-nine. You've got 30 miles to fly to the threshold.

10:19.53, Swissair 111: Uh, we need more than thirty miles.

10:21.23, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, when you

advertently broadcast on the air? Du bist emergency checklist for air-conditioning smoke? [Translation: You are in the emergency checklist for air-conditioning smoke?]

10:24.28, Swissair 111: [Background phone]. Ah, Swissair one-eleven.

At the time we must fly, ah, manually. Are we cleared to fly between, ah, ten thousand and nine thousand feet? [Sound of audible signal when the autopilot is switched on.]

10:24.45, Swissair 111: Swissair one-eleven heavy is declaring emergency.

10:24.56, Swissair 111: Eleven heavy, we starting dump now, we have to land immediate.

10:25.00, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, just a couple of miles, I'll be right with you.

10:25.19, Halifax controller: Swissair one-eleven, you are cleared to, ah, commence your fuel dump on that track (while maintaining your present direction) and advise me, ah, when the dump is complete.

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Chirac's past may return to haunt him

BILL CLINTON is tottering; Boris Yeltsin is wobbling. Will they shortly be joined in their woe by the industrial and democratic world's only other President with real power?

President Jacques Chirac has no bimbo problems; the French economy is doing fine. But there is an outside possibility that, in the next few months, Mr Chirac could become the first French President to be placed under formal examination for legal wrongdoing.

There is a constitutional problem, however. Under one reading of the French constitution, it is impossible for a president to face legal proceedings while in office, except for high treason.

A relentless judicial investigation of the finances of his neo-Gaullist party, the RPR, has been creeping closer to Mr Chirac for months.

Evidence unearthed yesterday by the investigative newspaper, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, suggests that in the seven years before Mr Chirac became President in 1995, the RPR party machine was widely and illegally staffed by people who were paid for doing fictitious jobs at the Paris town hall and in private companies.

Mr Chirac was both president of the RPR and mayor of Paris at the time. Last month, Mr Chirac's long-time associate, the former prime minister, Alain Juppé, was placed under formal investigation - one step short of a charge - for his suspected role in the affair of the "emplois fictifs".

Since then, new evidence

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

has come to light - including one scribbled note on a letter - which suggests that Mr Chirac knew as much as Mr Juppé about what was going on.

Le Canard Enchaîné yesterday published a drawing of the RPR's headquarters in the Rue de Lille, in the chic 7th arrondissement, overlaid with arrows and bubbles.

The newspaper detailed the activities of 40 people who worked full-time for the party from 1988 to 1995, but who were paid either by the taxpayers of Paris or by private companies doing business with the Paris town hall. This amounted to more than half the staff of the RPR at the time.

Le Canard Enchaîné estimates that the party was making an annual £1m saving in salaries.

As head of both organisations, could Mr Chirac have remained aloof from and ignorant of such systematic cheating, as his supporters insist that he did?

According to press leaks, the magistrate in charge of the investigation (one of several overlapping investigations into the byzantine finances of the RPR) has almost as much evidence pointing to the involvement of Mr Chirac as he has against Mr Juppé.

Judge Patrick Desmure must decide whether he wants to bring a tidal wave of constitutional and political argument - and abuse - down upon his little office in the Paris suburbs by becoming the first magis-

trate to take a tilt at the head of state.

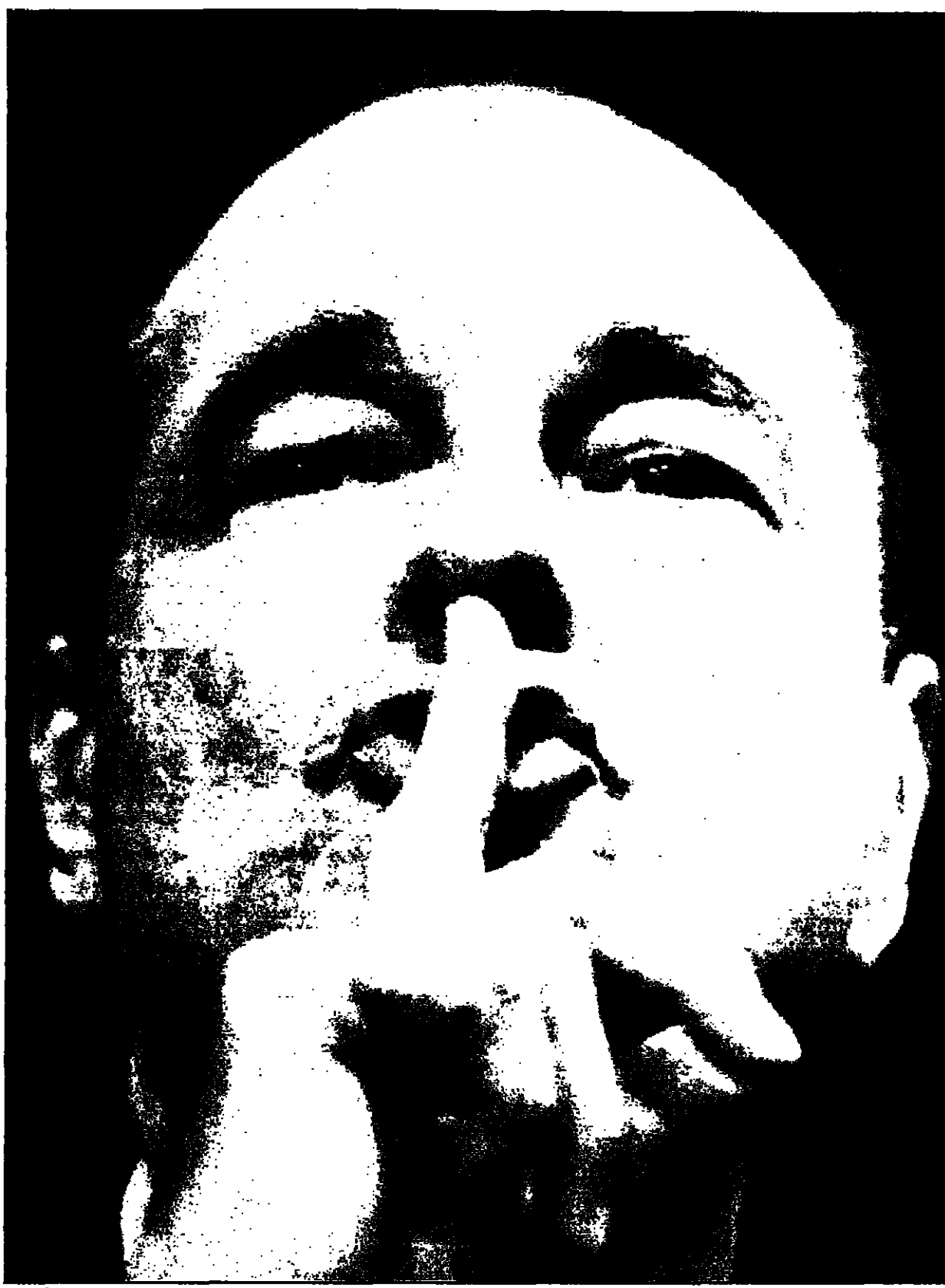
Everything turns on the ambiguous wording of Article 68 of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which was copied more or less unchanged from previous constitutions. This states that the "President of the Republic is not responsible for deeds committed during the exercise of his functions, except in the case of high treason. He cannot be placed under accusation, except by the two Assemblies [National Assembly and Senate]."

Under one reading, this gives the President complete immunity from all legal proceedings, short of treason, while he is in office. On another reading, the immunity does not apply to anything that he did before he became President.

Although the French judiciary is nominally independent - and increasingly truly independent - the case also poses an awkward problem for Mr Chirac's political opponent but co-habiting Socialist, the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin.

The attitude taken by the justice ministry, under Mr Jospin's close ally, Elisabeth Guigou, could be crucial. Mr Chirac remains a popular figure in France; he remains, for all his failings, the only convincing figure on the centre-right.

Will Mr Jospin be tempted to let him be embroiled in legal problems before the next presidential election in 2002? Or could that rebound against Mr Jospin and make the day-to-day relationship between Prime Minister and President untenable?



President Jacques Chirac calls to his audience for hush - but does France still believe what he says?

Italians jump airport queue

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

FOR YEARS, Milan's travellers have faced no more than a 15-minute taxi drive from the city centre to the cramped but convenient local airport, Linate. On 26 October, that will all change when most airlines are shunted to a brand new hub built 53 kilometres (33 miles) or an hour's journey away.

One important category of travellers will be spared the extra journey, though - those travelling to Rome, most of whom just happen to be customers of the national carrier, Alitalia. Nine other European airlines have cried foul and the row has embroiled the Italian premier, Romano Prodi, and the European Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock.

With the issue still deadlocked the European Commission warned yesterday that Italy has a week to negotiate a settlement or face a formal declaration that it is breaking European Union law. One source said it could mean "chaos" at Linate on 25 October, with foreign airlines refusing to move.

Behind the bust-up lie the cut-throat economics of the European airline business. Air travel has expanded and Linate, with its single runway, last year handled more than 14 million passengers, making the case for a new, northern Italian hub unanswerable.

For the new airport at Malpensa to become viable, the airport - built with European aid - needs traffic, hence the Italians' desire to shift airlines to it. But the promised Malpensa Express rail link has yet to begin service and work on widening the main road artery is also behind schedule.

Moreover, the Italian government's rules on who can stay at Linate have caused consternation by favouring only carriers on the most popular route, that with 3 million passengers a year. In practice, it means that flights only to Rome's Fiumicino are guaranteed a place, giving Alitalia, which dominates the route, the advantage of being able to feed its hub in Rome from Linate.

Rival airlines, including British Airways, Sabena, Lufthansa, Air France and SAS say they stand to lose out. Many of Milan's well-heeled business travellers take a short flight from Linate to connect to intercontinental flights from other European airports.

In the aviation industry, yesterday's Commission verdict, expected to rule against the Italian authorities, was as eagerly awaited as some of Linate's fog-bound arrivals. In the event, Mr Kinnock said that although the Commission had decided Italy was acting against European law, formal adoption of this decision would be delayed for a week.

Russia's king-maker challenges the oligarchs

GRINNING AND tanned, Gennady Zyuganov had the air of a man who was finally enjoying his moment in the sun. For years, he has endured the mockery of those who dismissed his Communist Party as has-beens. And for years, he had been scorned as a man with about as much charisma as a traffic bollard. Now, finally, the tables were turning.

Russia's political crisis has given the Communists more political muscle than they have had since the party was rebuilt on the wreckage of their Soviet predecessors. A reflection of this came last night when its central committee issued a triumphalist, but fanciful offering to set up a "government of popular trust".

Times have changed since

BY PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

1996, when Mr Zyuganov was thrashed by a 13-point margin in the presidential race. Boris Yeltsin has never been weaker. It is uncertain whether he commands enough authority to be sure he can use military force to assert his will in a crisis.

The Communists, the largest of the array of forces ranged against the Kremlin, have finally acquired real bargaining power. And, speaking to selected foreign correspondents yesterday, Mr Zyuganov knew it.

He was sporting his pro-Western credentials. He talked airily about the importance of the multi-party system, investment, free speech, good relations with Europe, mixed

property ownership. What Russia needed was a "left and centre government, which will enjoy the support of the majority in this country," he said. "We don't want power for ourselves because we don't consider that right under the circumstances. We want a broad coalition."

There was little trace of the other Gennady Zyuganov, the author of *A Word to the People*, the manifesto of the men behind the failed coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991.

Nor was there any sign of the conspiracy theorist who believes that the West is plotting to create a "New World Order" or the nostalgic Soviet who remains silent about Stalin's crimes and enthusiastically praises the dictator's industrial triumphs. Yet there are also limits to his negotiating muscle, and he also knows that.

It is impossible for him to strike a deal with a Kremlin in which Viktor Chernomyrdin becomes premier. Such a cave-in would threaten his position as leader among the divided ranks of his coalition of forces.

He also knows that if Mr Yeltsin refuses to budge, and the Duma is dissolved after rejecting the hapless acting premier for a third time, there is no guarantee the Communists will benefit. New elections seem certain to produce a parliament even more hostile to Mr Yeltsin, but it is uncertain whether that opposition will contain a larger Communist element.

The party has had a problem expanding its electorate, despite 500,000 members and a nationwide network. Its voters tend to be elderly, with an average age of 52 in 1996. There is little evidence that its support has been strengthened by the current crisis; the only sure conclusion is that the economic collapse has deepened cynicism in the political process.

Thus, Mr Zyuganov and his colleagues have been willing in the past few days to go to surprising lengths to get a deal - short of endorsing Mr Chernomyrdin. Their list of compromise candidates for prime minister includes Yevgeny Primakov, a former ally of Mikhail Gorbachev, who is loathed by many on the left who accuse him of destroying the Soviet Union. The Foreign Minister is "educated and experienced,"

said Mr Zyuganov yesterday. He was as complimentary about another anti-Communist, the nationalist mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov.

At bottom, Mr Zyuganov is a deal-maker. Although he boasts about his willingness to lead "massive protest actions", his impulses are to strike a bargain that gives the legislature more powers, and saves the Duma from dismissal.

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Zyuganov: Sporting his pro-Western credentials

Struggle for soul of a closed city

FRONTLINE
ANI, TURKEY

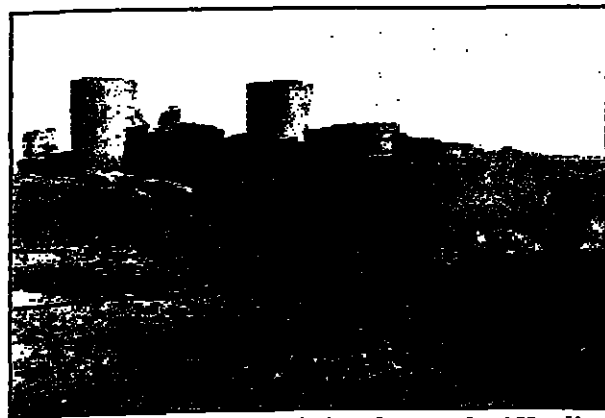
A SOLDIER sits smoking on the wall of a half-ruined church. Huge battlefields rise across the empty plateau. This is Ani, once the fabled city of a thousand churches, now a military border post. The ruined bridge that once carried the Silk Road here cannot be repaired, because one half is in Turkey, the other in the former Soviet Republic of Armenia.

"Nobody took care of Ani. It was being ruined more and more every day," says Sarkis Seropyan, a greying former technician who writes for *Agos*, the weekly newspaper of the 70,000 Armenians living in Turkey. In its 10th-century heyday, Ani was the capital of an Armenian empire. The few buildings left, their walls patterned in red and black stone, show the city must have been magnificent. By the 12th century it had street lighting, drains and an underground fresh-water supply.

But Ani spent most of this century on the tense border between Turkey and the Soviet Union, and nothing was done to protect the ruins. Situated on a high plateau where winter temperatures can fall to -39C, the buildings suffered severe frost damage.

Ani is still under Turkish military control. "There are far too many restrictions on visiting Ani," Mr Seropyan says.

Though the site is advertised as a tourist attraction, visitors have to obtain permits from the tourism office, police



Ani, the city of a thousand churches Robert Harding

and museum in nearby Kars before entering the site. On arrival, they are briefed by an armed soldier on where they may go. Troops patrol the site and use the ruins of a mosque as a look-out post. A ban on cameras was lifted recently, but photographers are not allowed to point their cameras at Armenia. Offenders are escorted from the site.

Turkey's long neglect of the Armenians' most important cultural monument embittered the country's tiny Armenian community. But restoration work and excavations began since the break-up of the Soviet Union have not satisfied the Armenians. "Restoration is about preserving the existing structure;

what they're doing is ruining it," one of Mr Seropyan's colleagues says. The restoration was started by the culture ministry but has ground to a halt after being unanimously condemned by Turkish and foreign archaeologists.

The dispute over the excavation is more complicated. The archaeologists, headed by Professor Beyhan Karamagali, are working hard to preserve the site and were instrumental in stopping the restoration work. Professor Karamagali has uncovered houses in Ani that she says are the earliest houses still standing in Turkey. It was she who discovered the underground drains, the water pipes and the street lighting. With the help of

a French architect, she has taken emergency measures to keep aloft a church on the verge of collapse.

"It's very difficult working in a military site," says the professor, a short, stern woman with a scarf tied round her head to keep the sun off. "We have very little funding. We can only work in summer, when there's no rain, and then the heat is very bad. And when we first arrived we had problems with the Kurdish terrorists."

Professor Karamagali has set up foundations in Turkey and the United States to pay for the preservation of Ani. But she says funds have been slow to arrive. "For the first two years we got nothing," she says. She wants to see a mu-

seum set up at Ani, to attract paying visitors. "With a museum Ani could be saved."

But the Armenians are unhappy about her work. "She doesn't know whose culture Ani belongs to," Mr Seropyan says. Professor Karamagali says Ani is the work of several races and cultures. Other peoples lived in Ani under the Armenians, and the city was later conquered. The professor says these other races contributed to the city. For instance, she says, the city's mosque was built by Seljuk Turks. Mr Seropyan insists it was an Armenian building, converted later into a mosque.

"I was interested in Ani because it was not only an Armenian settlement but also a Muslim and a Zoroastrian one," the professor says. Challenging the Armenian heritage in Anatolia is a sensitive subject: most of the region's Armenians were massacred by the Ottomans in the First World War. To this day Turkey denies that this genocide took place.

Professor Karamagali insists politics has nothing to do with her work. "We are not interested in religion or race. We are only interested in monuments, and in restoring them. Ani was a place where three different cultures, Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians, lived together in peace and friendship as long ago as the 7th century."

JUSTIN HUGGLER

Jackal sidekick arrested

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

A RETIRED German terrorist and former associate of Carlos the Jackal has been arrested in France, 22 years after he gave up the struggle against international capitalism.

Hans-Joachim Klein, aged 51, known in his terrorist days as "Angie", was arrested by French anti-terrorist police in Sainte-Honorine-la-Guillemette, Normandy, where he has been living for five years.

Klein was involved in one of Carlos's most spectacular and brutal exploits, the kidnapping of Opec oil ministers in Vienna

in December 1975, which ended with the murder of three people. Soon afterwards, he signalled his abandonment of the cause by sending his weapon to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*. He has spent the past two decades on the run from the German police and his own former associates. He believed they were trying to kill him.

In an interview with the French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* three years ago he

said: "I'm in hiding. I have no work, no money. It's been like that for 17 years." Soon afterwards a German court re-issued an international arrest warrant for Klein.

The French authorities are said to have been aware for several years that he was living in France without making any special efforts to track him down. He was arrested after a tip-off from the German police.

Klein was known to his neighbours in Normandy as "Dirk" and passed as a freelance journalist.



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First round to Murdoch, nine to go

BY RAISING its bid the extra £50m, Sky did enough to force Greg Dyke and other malingers on the Manchester United board to carry out their fiduciary duty and recommend the offer. For choice, they would have been with the fans and for scuppered the deal in its entirety.

Still, it's just as well someone leaked the story over the weekend, since the chief executive, Martin Edwards, was all ready to sell at an undervalue of 217p a share. This is the very same Mr Edwards, it will be recalled, who less than ten years ago agreed to flog the club to the property developer Michael Knighton for a paltry £10m. Clearly he's a man of sound judgement and vision.

The leak ensured that Mr Murdoch was forced to raise his offer, not just once, but twice, before the board finally caved in. By all accounts Professor Sir Roland Smith, the chairman, was in his element extolling the intangible value of such a unique brand, and its added value to Sky. Without doubt, he secured a fabulous price.

For Rupert Murdoch, however, this is merely round one in the fight. Now comes the much tougher pounding he'll take from the regulators. The bid poses a very real



OUTLOOK

dilemma for New Labour. If Peter Mandelson, whose friendship with Elisabeth Murdoch is apparently not enough to declare him offside, nods it through, the charge of cronyism will become that much more intense. If he stops it, New Labour will lose Mr Murdoch's support for ever.

In such circumstances his only viable course of action is to play the whole thing off into the long grass by referring it to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Indeed the perfect political outcome from his perspective would be for John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, to recommend against reference, for Mr Mandelson to go against the advice and

refer, thus placating the anti-Murdoch press, but for the MMC eventually to clear it. Unfortunately for him there are quite enough public interest issues raised by this bid for Mr Bridgeman to recommend reference off his own bat.

There may be no competition issues involved here, strictly speaking, but vertical integration of this type has been quite enough to prompt regulatory action before. Here's just one, minor example of its consequences. In possible breach of stock exchange rules and securities law, Sky leaked details of its new offer to first editions of the Times and the Sun before formally announcing the bid to the world, thus giving these titles a competitive edge on the news stands. It could reasonably be argued that this is just a harbinger of things to come. This is a story that's going to run and run.

Credit Suisse

THE DEFINITION of an emerging market, the old joke goes, is one from which it is impossible to emerge in an emergency. Old it may be, but Credit Suisse plainly never

heard it, let alone heeded it. After Credit Suisse First Boston's less than helpful statement a couple of weeks back on how much had been lost in the Russian crisis, the parent company, Credit Suisse, yesterday came clean.

The full technical version is disturbing in the extreme. The bank's remaining unprovisioned exposure to Russia alone is just over \$2bn. Taking in Indonesia, Brazil and other emerging markets, the amounts outstanding add up to rather more than \$8bn. If Credit Suisse were to adopt the same approach as Barclays, and write off 90 per cent of its exposure to these markets, the effect would be to wipe out its entire disclosed reserves and some. And that's assuming we now have the whole picture.

CSFB may be an extreme case, but there are many others badly burnt by the events of the past nine months. No wonder so many bankers are talking about a worldwide credit crunch, stretching from the developing world right through to the major industrial nations. After losses like these, the natural instinct of all bankers will be just to say no - however good the proposition.

LucasVarity

THE NEWS that LucasVarity is moving from Birmingham to Buffalo, New York, and taking its primary stock market listing with it, completes the Americanisation of what was once part of the British engineering establishment.

Almost from the day the group was forged out of the automotive businesses of Lucas and Varity, it has been clear that this was less a merger of equals, and more a backdoor US takeover in all but name.

Victor Rice, the hard-driving chief executive of Varity, quickly cleared out the remnants of the Lucas board and the bulk of the job losses and disposals that followed fell on the British end of the operation.

Along with the change in management came a payout policy more closely aligned to the US system with shareholders rewarded through buybacks rather than conventional dividends. So the decision to up sticks and decamp to the US, accompanied by the promise of a 20 per cent share buyback, looks like the natural continuation of the process.

jobs when the decisions are being taken 3,000 miles away. There is a risk that the deal will not get through, since the change of domicile needs a 75 per cent vote in favour and UK funds still hold 47 per cent of the stock. On the other hand, British institutions have already allowed US mutuals to take creeping control since the merger, so it would be a pity to let it slip now.

Japan

IT WOULD hardly be possible for Japan to cut short-term interest rates any further than it did yesterday. At 0.25 per cent for overnight money, Japan is perilously close to the position where depositors will have to pay the banks for the privilege of lending them money.

With the yen strengthening in recent months, the Central Bank of Japan took the opportunity to cut the call rate to the lowest level that can be achieved in nominal terms without moving into the Alice in Wonderland world just outlined. Because prices are falling in Japan, real interest rates are still quite high, of course, so the effect of the change is unlikely to be any more than marginal.

Still, with Japan in a state of political paralysis, there are very few things the authorities can still do to stimulate demand. With yesterday's cut, they used up the one remaining option. As the first easing in monetary conditions in Japan for three years, this is undoubtedly an important signal, but it seems doubtful it amounts to much else.

The cost of money is not the reason Japan's economy is sinking. That's got much more to do with the very serious nature of its banking crisis, made that much worse by economic meltdown in the rest of the Far East. If Hong Kong were to go too, it's hard to see how the system could maintain any remaining vestige of credibility, such as the exposure of Japanese banks to the former colony's property market. A very large part of the Japanese banking system would have to be closed.

And tempting though it might be for markets to regard the cut as just the first in a general easing of rates throughout the developed world, don't count on it. It is still odds on that the MPC won't cut UK rates at the end of its two day meeting today, and the chances of the Fed cutting rates soon look even more remote.

News Analysis: Individual Savings Accounts are meant to create millions of new savers, but it's all falling apart

ISAs - a savings scheme too far?

WHEN LABOUR first set out its policy on personal saving two years ago, there was supposed to be a simple problem and a simple solution. Half the population have less than £500 in savings. More people should save, especially those on lower incomes. The reason they did not was a combination of fear of being ripped off and an aversion to locking away their money.

Labour's answer was Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), a new all-in-one version of previous tax-exempt savings schemes such as PEPs and Tessas. With a bit of nip and tuck with tax rules, Labour planned to double the number of savers to 12 million. Rip-off fears would be allayed by introducing "benchmark savings" carrying a government endorsement. Savings vehicles would be made cheaper by distributing them through mass-market outlets. And the lock-in would be abolished.

Sixteen months after the election, many are asking if the policy is disintegrating. In the spring the Government was forced to back down after opposition to a plan to cap the total amount savable in ISAs, PEPs and Tessas at £50,000. But the concession failed to stop the entire strategy being called into question. Was this really designed to encourage saving, or was it driven by the Inland Revenue's desire to cut tax relief?

The Government's plan to endorse the right type of ISAs, published in May as a Treasury consultation paper, was also

BY ANDREW VERITY

panned as impractical and even dangerous. In childishly large capital letters the paper proclaimed its objective - "Making Saving Easy". The big idea was the "CAT-mark", a Treasury stamp of approval awarded to savings products on the basis of cost, access and terms.

Richard Branson was happy. The only share investment the Government would approve was a fund tracking the FTSE 100 - just the kind he had long promoted through Virgin Direct, his financial services venture. But managers of active funds fumed, pointing out that trackers were the most volatile kind of investment.

The Treasury was attacked for opening up the possibility of a "mis-buying scandal". Helena Wiesner, deputy chairman of the PIA and a consumer representative, said that the Treas-



Geoffrey Robinson (left) launched the ISA initiative; Helen Liddell (centre) took it over; and it is now in the hands of Patricia Hewitt

asury would be blamed if people lost money after buying trackers with Treasury approval.

Then things really began to fall apart. The Government had said it would life insurance to be available within a CAT-marked ISA. Standard Life, initially an ISA fan, said it would not do it: only £2,000 of life assurance could be saved each year, changes would have to be tiny, and life insurers could barely make money. Other insurers agreed.

A change of personnel at the Treasury made matters worse. Initially launched by Geoffrey Robinson, the paymaster-general, the ISA plan was taken over by Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

The Government is now rumoured to be ready to ditch its plan to CAT-mark stocks and shares and restrict its endorsement to cash. But no-one really knows what is happening. The savings industry was led to expect hard Treasury proposals on CAT-marks by the end of July, but a reshuffle left a new minister, Patricia Hewitt, in charge at the Treasury. Since then, the Government has said nothing about the consultation.

And, the trade body for unit trust providers, says its members would find it nearly impossible to change computers by April, when the grand launch of ISAs is due. The cost is estimated at a minimum of £185m. "All it's going to do is cost the

industry a hell of a lot of money which inevitably will get passed on to the consumer," says Anne McMahon, Autif spokeswoman. Worse, the heads of "super-market banks" have become critical. Sainsbury's, Tesco, Marks & Spencer and others were supposed to offer ISAs in their stores. Sainsbury's and Tesco were considered a crucial distribution channel for the cash version of the ISA.

Stuart Sinclair, the chief executive at Tesco Personal Finance, has dubbed ISAs "a real cannel" - a hotchpotch animal created by a committee. The government assumption was, he said, that Tesco would offer ISAs "for low". How could ISAs be sold without incurring the

usual sales and advice costs? Richard Chadwick, the deputy chief executive of Sainsbury's Bank, said the Government was being optimistic about the new savers it would attract. "A lot of people don't save because they haven't got the money," he said. Even Marks & Spencer, which has said it will offer an ISA next April, is worried about delays.

The Treasury can take some comfort in the fact that some sort of ISA will appear next April. But will it achieve the objective of boosting saving? The National Consumer Council, which represents precisely the low-income groups targeted, thinks not.

Low-income savers will be

attracted in one respect - unlike Tessa's, ISAs will not require savers to lock their money up for years. But what inducement do savers have to use ISAs at all? Ruth Evans, a director of NCC, says: "Neither tax-free ISAs nor CAT standards will do much to boost the level of savings. Tax relief is pretty meaningless to the 28 per cent of working adults who are too poor to pay tax. Anyone saving on a small scale will gain virtually nothing from the relief."

Labour's original grudge against PEPs and Tessa's was that tax relief was an upward redistribution of wealth - a subsidy from all taxpayers to those who can afford to save.

But Howard Flight, Conservative MP and head of fund managers Guinness Flight, claims this effect will become worse. ISAs discourage the poor from investing in shares. The tax relief means nothing to non-taxpayers. Basic-rate taxpayers get a credit of only 10 per cent, which disappears after 2004. Because of the way the tax benefits work, only taxpayers paying the top rate of 40 per cent will really benefit.

"The less well off you are the less you will benefit. The whole pretence that this was being done as something of benefit to low-income groups is a complete facade," says Mr Flight.

IN BRIEF

German rates to stay unchanged

GERMAN economic growth slowed sharply in the second quarter, according to official statistics released yesterday.

The Bundesbank said gross domestic product grew by 0.1 per cent in the three months to June, compared to a figure of 1.4 per cent in the first quarter.

Economists said first quarter growth was buoyed by one-off factors, and that the combination of low growth and low inflation in Germany meant the Bundesbank was unlikely to change interest rates this year.

Recession looms

THERE IS now a 40 per cent chance of a recession in the UK, according to Professor Hashem Pesaran of Cambridge University, a leading economist. He warned yesterday that the chances of meeting the inflation target without damaging economic growth were "rather low" in the medium term.

Using a new model of the UK economy, Professor Pesaran also found there was a 63 per cent probability of a cut in interest rates by the middle of next year.

Malaysia rating

FTICB, a credit-rating agency, has downgraded Malaysia's debt amid worries about the long-term impact of the country's newly-imposed capital controls. It cut Malaysia's long-term and short-term foreign currency ratings yesterday to BB and B respectively.

PFI reporting

COMPANIES involved in the Government's Private Finance Initiative will have to disclose their liabilities under the contracts in their accounts following an amendment to the rules on "reporting the substance of transactions" published by the Accounting Standards Board today.

The amendment has immediate effect.

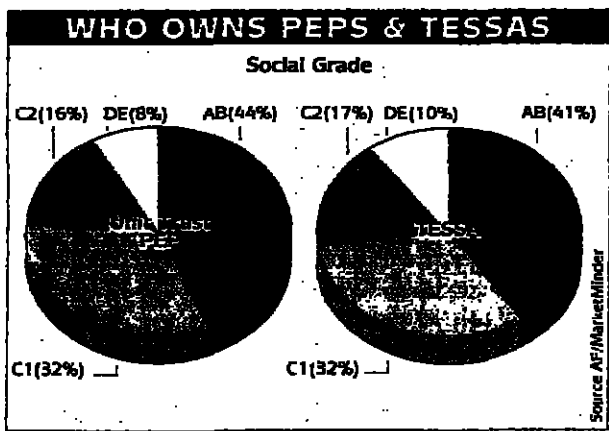
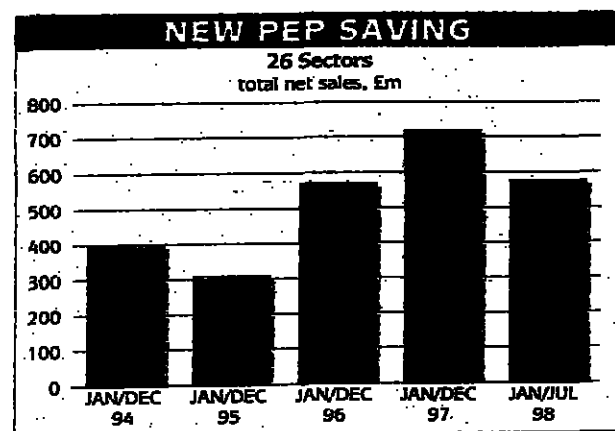
In making the change, the board chaired by Sir David Tweedie has resisted Treasury calls for less stringent guidelines and responded to concern among auditors that there might be widespread problems if such transactions did not appear on company balance sheets.

Biomedix loss

K S BIOMEDIX, a biotechnology company which develops drugs from sheep, yesterday reported a 20 per cent increase in pre-tax losses to £1.02m from £847,000 a year ago.

The group, which plans to move from the junior Alternative Investment Market to the main list next month, said laboratory work and drug trials were the main item of expenditure.

It added that it expected to complete phase II trials for its anti-arthritis drugs by the end of the year.



MAKING SAVING EASY

The ISA scheme was set out in May in a Treasury consultation paper

Only 10% switch to new electricity suppliers

ONLY 10 per cent of households will switch their electricity supplier when the market is opened to competition from next week - half the level achieved when the gas market was liberalised.

Industry executives forecast yesterday that price cuts would be less than half those that followed gas liberalisation, with electricity customers likely to see the average £250 bill fall by about £25, or 10 per cent. When British Gas's domestic monopoly was ended, consumers saw price reductions from rival suppliers as much as 25 per cent.

The smaller number of customers expected to switch was due to a combination of consumer inertia and the fact that the level of savings was

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

lower, said John Roberts, president of the Electricity Association and chief executive of Hyder Utilities.

However, price reductions will also be limited because the industry is being allowed to pass on the £726m cost of gearing up for liberalisation to its 26 million domestic and small business customers. This works out at just under £28 per customer.

The first phase of liberalisation goes live on Monday when 750,000 households in the areas covered by Manweb, Scottish Power, Eastern and Yorkshire will be allowed to shop around for a different supplier. The rest of the country will be opened up to competition in phases,

with all areas taking part by Christmas and the exercise completed by June.

However, apart from the 12 regional electricity companies in England and Wales, and the two Scottish suppliers, only two other groups have applied for licences to supply the domestic market - Centrica, which trades as British Gas, and Independent Energy.

In an attempt to avoid the high-pressure selling techniques which accompanied the opening of the gas market, energy companies have agreed a voluntary marketing code. This covers doorstep selling, and requires suppliers to give written quotations and like-for-like price comparisons with current charges.

UK poverty levels 'among worst of industrial nations'

THE UK has one of the highest poverty levels of all industrialised nations, according to a report commissioned by the United Nations.

The report says 13.5 per cent of the UK population are below the income poverty line, and 21.8 per cent are "functionally illiterate" - meaning that they are unable to perform simple tasks such as read a story to a child or the label on a medicine bottle.

Of the industrialised nations, only the US has a greater proportion of the population below the poverty line and only Ireland has worse literacy rates, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1998 Human Development Report.

James Gustave Speth, the UNDP administrator, called the poverty num-

BY LEA PATTERSON

bers in industrialised nations "shockingly high, given the affluence".

On the report's new measure of human poverty in the developed world, the UK ranked 15th out of the 17 industrial nations. Only Ireland and the US ranked lower, with the Nordic countries coming in at the top.

The UK's dismal showing came despite the country's relatively high levels of GDP per capita. "Human poverty is deprivation in multiple dimensions, not income," the report explains. "The priority to eradicate poverty and ensure the basic needs of all remains. The failure of the richest countries to do that is a scandal." Simon Zadek, the development di-

rector of the New Economics Foundation (NEF) and a contributor to the report, said: "I think the experience of the 1980s has left the social fabric of the UK in pretty poor shape."

World consumption totalled \$24 trillion in 1998, twice the level of 1975 and six times that of 1950. But the poorest 20 per cent of the population have not been part of the so-called "consumption explosion" - an estimated 1 billion people do not have access to basic consumption needs.

The Human Development Report - launched globally in 1990 as an attempt to provide an alternative to the traditional financial yardsticks of success - called the East Asian crisis "the biggest setback to human development in the past year".

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HOME NEWS

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Headteacher recruitment crisis

Thousands of schools are being run by temporary heads because of the worst ever headteacher recruitment crisis. Page 6

Popular boom for retail therapy

Compulsive shopping, where people find they cannot control their buying habits, has more than doubled in the past 20 years and is affecting more men and children than ever before. Page 8

Tough new rules for wildlife sites

Tough new powers to prosecute landowners who damage Britain's most valuable wildlife sites have been proposed by the Government. Page 10

FOREIGN NEWS

PAGES 12-15

Britain delays Kosovo flight ban

Britain broke ranks with the EU yesterday over plans to punish Serbia for its brutal treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Page 12

Trapped whales mock free Keiko

While millions of dollars are being lavished in an ambitious project to return Keiko to his native Iceland, conservationists are fighting to stop the capture of more killer whales for display in marine parks and aquaria around the world. Page 13

BUSINESS NEWS

PAGES 16-22

FTSE tumbles as Wall Street falls

World stock markets sustained heavy losses as they followed Wall Street downwards as fears over the future of President Bill Clinton unnerved investors. Page 16

Centrica targets 4m customers

Centrica, the gas giant, aims to capture 4 million electricity customers and pay shareholders their first dividend since the demerger from BG. Page 19

SPORTS NEWS

PAGES 23-28

Wales calls off hockey match

Wales called off a hockey game against Canada at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur when eight players fell ill with suspected food poisoning. Page 23

RFU suspends picking referees

The Rugby Football Union has suspended the appointment of referees for this weekend's matches involving Bedford and West Hartlepool. Page 28

FRIDAY REVIEW

28-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

Anatole Lieven

'Russia's rulers under Yeltsin have undermined its health to the point where it was bound to succumb to any serious new global financial infection.' Page 4

Mary Dejevsky

'So long as Mr Clinton's public opinion poll ratings hold up, so long as he is credited with the strength of the US economy and positive national feelings, Congress will be reluctant to move against him.' Page 5

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Cryptic crossword, section one, page 28



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT
RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the total for UK newspapers in the first half of 1998

New nemesis for President

FOUR MEN WITH DESTINY IN THEIR HANDS

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

CONGRESS IS likely to agree today to release the contents of the Starr report on President Clinton. Congressman Henry Hyde said yesterday, with key sections posted on the Internet.

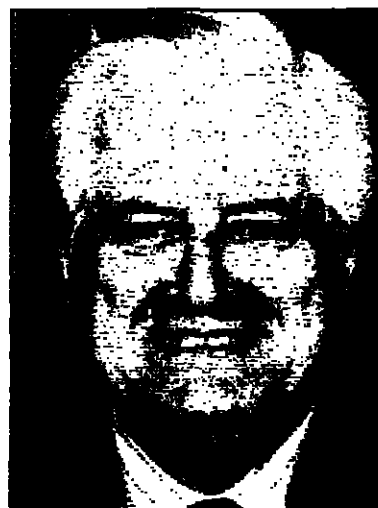
For the past eight months, the President's nemesis has been Kenneth Starr, the Republican lawyer who single-mindedly pursued Bill Clinton and his libido through the corridors of the White House.

From today, the politicians take over from the lawyers. Mr Hyde, a Republican, chairs the Judiciary Committee that will lead impeachment hearings should they occur.

Mr Hyde himself will set the tone and speed of the proceedings that will decide the fate of the president. He will also have to maintain discipline within a committee that is difficult to control at the best of times; and these are not the best of times on Capitol Hill.

Hyde had already said that impeachment solely on the grounds of the President's sexual misadventures would not be desirable, and added on Thursday that any proceedings would be carried out in a non-partisan way. "I will not condone, nor participate in, a political witch hunt," he said, promising "a fair, full and independent review of the evidence on our own."

Mr Hyde is a Congressman of long standing, and in the traditional style. The silver-haired 74-year-old smokes cigars, and during the Second World War skipped a landing craft in the



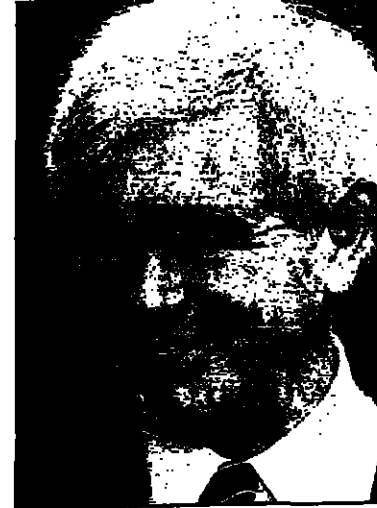
HENRY HYDE
74-year-old chairman of the Judiciary Committee which will lead impeachment hearings



BARNEY FRANK
Left-wing member of the Judiciary Committee. He is unlikely to attack Clinton



BOB BARR
An attack-dog of the conservative right from Georgia who has been calling for impeachment



NEWT GINGRICH
Speaker of the House, and the prime mover in getting the report made public

Pacific. He was born and bred in Chicago, a Catholic and a Democrat, but felt the party shifting away from him in the Sixties.

He represents a well-off north-western suburb of Chicago, near O'Hare airport. This is where First Lady Hillary Clinton grew up, an area of solid Republicanism and middle-class values. It is an area that voted for President Bush in 1992, even as the rest of the country - and especially Chicago, a Democratic bastion - swung behind Mrs Clinton's husband.

The *Almanac of America*

Politics describes him as "one of the most respected and intellectually honest members of the House," a Representative since 1974. He is on the right of the party, one of its most conservative members who is adamantly opposed to abortion, backs a constitutional ban on flag-burning and takes a strong stand on moral issues.

The fight to maintain discipline has already been launched by both Mr Hyde and Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House. Mr Gingrich has remained largely silent for the past few weeks, despite his record as a free-talking, some-

times wild figure on the Republican right. Party, this is because he wants to maintain the image of bipartisanship that is essential to making the proceedings work.

But Mr Gingrich himself has some dirty laundry in the cupboard. Divorce proceedings were served against his wife while she lay in hospital dying of cancer.

It will not be an easy task to maintain decorum. The Judiciary Committee contains some of the most partisan members of both parties.

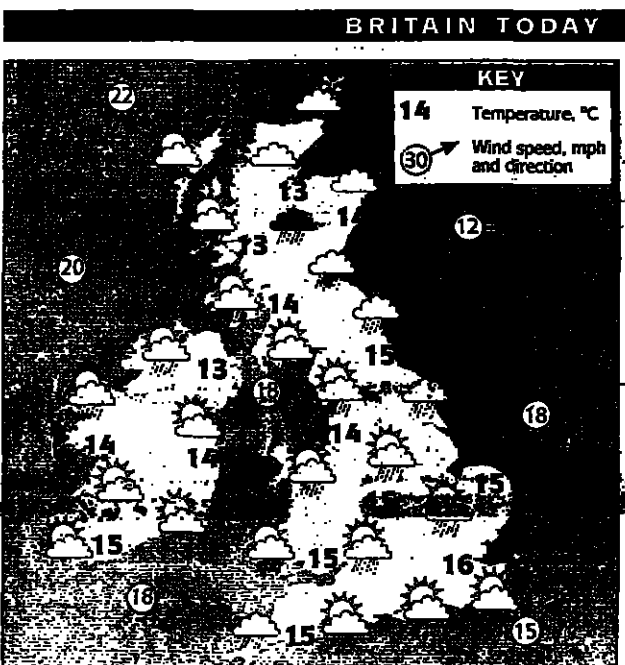
At one end of the spectrum is Barney Frank from Massa-

chusetts, on the left wing of the Democrats. Mr Frank - the only openly gay Congressman - has been faced with sexual scandals himself. At the other pole is Bob Barr of Georgia, an attack-dog of the conservative right who has been calling for the impeachment of the President since last year.

For the moment, it is these figures - Congressmen with little presence outside the US - who will be crucial. Final judgment on the President, if he is impeached, would be delivered by the Senate, allowing many of those who have already criticised the President, such as De-

mocratic Senators Pat Moynihan and Joseph Lieberman, to have their say. It would be presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William Rehnquist.

Mr Hyde is grudgingly aware of the dimensions of what he now faces. Some Congressmen criticised the style of the delivery of the Starr report to Capitol Hill on Thursday, not Mr Hyde. "I have no criticism of Judge Starr," he said. "He belongs to the pantheon of saints. He's gone through hell." It is an experience which Mr Hyde will now, in many ways, repeat.



FORECAST

General situation: A noticeably cooler day than recently. Eastern Scotland and north-east England will be cloudy with rain at times. Western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be brighter but there will be a scattering of showers. England and Wales will also be brighter with the best of any sunny spells across the south-east.

London, Cent S & SE England, E Anglia: Cooler than recent days with showers and a few sunny spells. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 15-18C (59-64F).

Channel Is, SW England, Wales: Rather cloudy with scattered showers and only a few limited sunny spells. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 15-17C (59-63F).

E England, Midlands, NW England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Rather showery, but becoming brighter this afternoon with fewer showers. A moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 14-16C (57-61F).

Cent W & NE England: A mostly cloudy day with some rain, the heaviest rain over the north ground. A moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 14-16C (57-61F).

N Ireland: Some bright spells, but cool with a few showers. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 13-14C (55-57F).

SW & W Scotland, Glasgow: W latest cool with sunny spells and blustery showers. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 12-15C (54-59F).

SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Isles: Mainly cloudy with rain. Brightening up late in the day. A moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 12-14C (54-58F).

OUTLOOK

It will be even cooler everywhere tomorrow. England, Wales and Scotland will have scattered showers and brief sunny spells. Northern Ireland will have a lot of cloud and some outbreaks of rain. Sunday and Monday will be cool and windy, the best of any sunshine in the south.

TRAVEL

Roads: West Midlands: M5 between J5 (Stam) and J2 (Dudley). Resurfacing work with narrow lanes both ways. Unit 12th October.

West Yorkshire: M1 between J43 (Stanton) and J42 (Lofthouse Interchange) (M62). Roadworks with 50mph speed limit. Unit 1st November.

Buckinghamshire: M40 between junctions 1a (A25) & 2 (Wycombe). Three narrow lanes both ways and a 50 mph speed limit in force. Unit 1st January 1999.

Berkshire: M4 between J9b (Maidenhead) and J7 (Slough). New road layout with a 50mph speed limit in a new half-mile carriageway during flood relief work. Unit 12th October.

Bristol: M5 J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Unit 1st January 2001. Suffolk A14. Various restrictions in place. Unit 1st December 1999.

AA Roadwatchers: Call 0356 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

BRITAIN TODAY		LIGHTING	
City	Temp	Time	Temp
Belfast	7.51pm to 6.50am		
Birmingham	7.33pm to 6.36am		
Bristol	7.35pm to 6.40am		
Cardiff	7.46pm to 6.42am		
London	7.25pm to 6.30am		
Manchester	7.35pm to 6.37am		
Newcastle	7.34pm to 6.35am		

HIGH TIDES	
City	Time
Amersham	11.21 13.0 11.46 12.7
Belfast	9.39 4.6 10.06 4.5
Birmingham	9.56 5.3 10.19 5.4
Bristol	2.57 6.6 3.17 6.7
Cardiff	3.22 4.4 3.57 4.7
London	3.27 3.2 3.58 3.5
Manchester	4.34 3.8 4.59 4.1
Newcastle	3.54 4.1 4.06 4.1
Sheffield	2.11 5.8 2.37 5.9
Southampton	10.17 3.0 10.48 3.1
Swansea	6.02 3.4 6.30 3.5
Wrexham	3.12 3.6 3.45 3.3

AIR QUALITY	
City	Index
London	Good
Manchester	Good
Newcastle	Good
Sheffield	Good
Southampton	Good
Swansea	Good
Wrexham	Good

SUN & MOON	
City	Time
London	06.29
Manchester	06.29
Newcastle	06.29
Sheffield	06.29
Southampton	06.29
Swansea	06.29
Wrexham	06.29

WEATHERLINE	
City	Temp
London	12.1
Manchester	12.1
Newcastle	12.1
Sheffield	12.1
Southampton	12.1
Swansea	12.1
Wrexham	12.1

RAIN OR SHINE	
City	Temp
London	12.1
Manchester	12.1
Newcastle	12.1
Sheffield	12.1
Southampton	12.1
Swansea	12.1
Wrexham	12.1

THE WORLD	
City	Temp
Adelaide	19.6
Algeria	19.6
Amsterdam	19.6
Ankara	19.6
Athens	19.6
Auckland	19.6
Bahia	19.6
Bangkok	19.6
Batavia	19.6
Bombay	19.6
Buenos Aires	19.6
Calcutta	19.6
Canton	19.6
Cebu	19.6
Colon	19.6
Hankow	19.6
Hong Kong	19.6
Kobe	19.6
London	19.6
Lyons	19.6
Manila	19.6
Medan	19.6
Peking	19.6
Rangoon	19.6
San Francisco	19.6
Shanghai	19.6
Singapore	19.6
Sourabaya	19.6
Tientsin	19.6
Yokohama	19.6

THE WORLD YESTERDAY	
City	Temp
Adelaide	19.6
Algeria	19.6
Amsterdam	19.6
Ankara	19.6
Athens	19.6
Auckland	19.6
Bahia	19.6
Bangkok	19.6
Batavia	19.6
Bombay	19.6
Buenos Aires	19.6
Calcutta	19.6
Canton	19.6
Cebu	19.6
Colon	19.6
Hankow	19.6
Hong Kong	19.6
Kobe	19.6
London	19.6
Lyons	19.6
Manila	19.6
Medan	19.6
Peking	19.6
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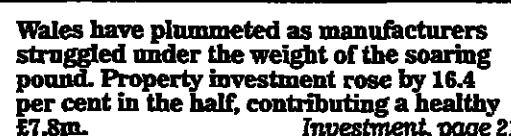
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JAVI 60 150

Miller combine wins rail tunnel contract

The group has a forward order book of £270m and is currently building the biggest sewer in Britain - a 7.5m storm water tunnel at Hastings.

Mr Webb warned of a "tougher trading climate" for the second half as demand is reduced by mortgage rate increases and a deteriorating economic background.



planned to sell its UK joinery division, lintels business and pipes division, representing annual sales of £182m. The company reported a fall in interim profits to £72m from £74m in 1997.

of businesses over the previous year and by the strength of sterling, which reduced published profits by £3m. The result triggered an 18.5p fall in the shares, which closed at 185p.

Turnover in the six months to the end of June was down by 30 per cent at £61.7m and on-

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Logical in IT

Uncertainty drives investors to drink

IT'S ALL BEEN enough to turn investors to drink. Uncertainty about the real strength of New York's overnight charge and bedevilled by Far Eastern anxieties, the stock market alighted on brewery and pub shares, encouraged by talk of their defensive merits in times of stress and strain.

Whitbread jumped 46p to 818p; Bass 27p to 902p and Scottish & Newcastle 25.5p to 812.5p. Investment houses BT Alex Brown and Merrill Lynch were the main instigators of the sudden taste for booze.

Alex Brown talked about "above-average yields and sub-market ratings", and Merrill, although downgrading profits forecasts, stressed the industry's underlying value and waxed positive about the prospects for the major brewing companies.

Merrill remained cautious about the regional brewers, whereas Alex Brown talked about the smaller brewers "coming into their own in the next two years". It also expressed its support for some of the out-of-favour pub companies such as Enterprise Inns, up 11p to 258.5p, and JD Wetherspoon, which

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

ended a shade firmer at 202.5p.

Footsie ended 33.9 points down at 5,311.3. It completely ignored New York's exhilarating display, managing an 87.8-point fall in the opening minutes; it later rallied with a 21-point gain, but with Wall Street uncertain ended on a cautious note.

The unease underlined the uncertainty in the market. It was subjected to a two-way pull, with the bulls and bears almost cancelling each other out. Lower interest rates today could signal at least a short-term victory for the bulls.

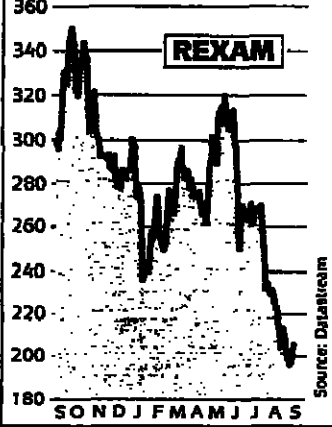
After the market closed the Footsie changes were announced. They were much as expected: Colt Telecom, TeleWest Communications, the computer group Sema, Securicor and Southern Electric were recruited at the expense of such traditional representatives of the nation's industrial might as British Steel, Blue Circle Industries and RMC. Rank, the struggling leisure group, and Enterprise Oil were the other casualties. Callender and Imperial, the tobacco groups, just missed inclusion.

The Footsie presence of LucasVarity, the aerospace and engineering group, was thrown into jeopardy following its decision to move its main listing to the US. At one time the shares were hit 18p as the market fretted about pension-fund selling as many institutions confine investment to UK quoted shares. But LV's strong figures, plus hopes of bid action, pushed the price up 2.5p to 210.5p.

Mid-cap arrivals include Coca-Cola Beverages, the insurance broker Jardine Lloyd Thompson and Psion. Danika Business Systems, House of Fraser and Cairn Energy

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence



Source: Datastream

suffer the indignity of slipping into the small cap index.

Supporting shares offered some encouragement, with the mid cap and small cap indices making modest progress. Among blue chips Kingfisher, following its surprise intervention in the Scottish Media bid for video publisher VCI, added 16p to 584p. VCI jumped 13p to 91.5p and Scottish Media firmed to 56p.

A raft of profits warnings and disappointing figures, perhaps not surprisingly announced after the day of the index calculations, took their toll. Albright & Wilson, the chemicals group where takeover rumours have circulated, fell 11p to 97.5p, a new low. Glywedd International fell 18p to 185.5p; Coats Viyella 7.5p to 40.5p and Devro 27p to 218p. Other casualties included Caradon, off 13.5p to 133.5p, and Telspec, down 77.5p to 97.5p.

REXAM, the struggling paper and packaging group, firmed 8p to 20.6.5p after Pannure Gordon made positive noises, suggesting the shares could go to 300p.

Manchester United, on the agreed but controversial BSkyB bid, rose 15.5p to 215.5p; the satellite television station gained 9p to 452p. British American Tobacco was pulled up a further 13p to 479p but its former financial side, Allied Zurich, remained shrouded in gloom, falling 56p to 730p.

Granada, the leisure group, held at 835p. There is talk that a major investment presentation is planned later this month.

UPF, an engineering group. The shares stuck at 112p, near their year's high, as Seag put volume at nearly 26 million. Charterhouse Tilney was said to be a heavy buyer.

Charterhouse also spoke up for Barratt Developments, the house-builder due to report figures soon. It suggested the shares were a buy because of their defensive qualities and the possibility of a "substantial swing in investor sentiment". The investment house said year's profits of £91m were likely with £100m next time.

Logica, up 147.5p to 1,822.5p on results, helped other computer shares to shake off their recent gloom clouds.

Desire Petroleum, seeking oil and gas off the Falkland Islands, fell 10p to 137.5p following a link with another South Atlantic explorer, Soda Petroleum, a Swedish group with a London quote. Desire, once at 445p, is to take a 12.5 per cent stake in a Soda drilling exercise off the Falklands. Soda held at 42.5p.

SEAG VOLUME: 885.5m
SEAG TRADES: 53,448
GILTS INDEX: 108.61 +0.41

TROUBLED Regent Inns, which once nursed takeover ambitions towards the rival SFI pubs chain, rose 8p to 160p as its former target disclosed that it had built a 3 per cent stake. SFI, formerly Surrey Free Inns, describes its holding as an "attractive investment". The market believes SFI is nursing hopes of buying Regent, which has been hit by a profits warning. Earlier this year Regent shares were riding at nearly 390p. SFI shaded to 150p.

RUBICON, an engineer which has collected a £307m American bid, was actively traded. The shares held at 230p against a 235p offer price. There was uncertainty as to whether the bidder, Applied Power, was in the market to buy or, perhaps, whether a rival bidder lurked. Turnover in Rubicon shares, according to Seag, was nearly 17.5 million, with deals of 8.7 million and 5.7 million shares swelling the volume.

Logica earns its place in IT premier league

IT HAS TAKEN some time, but British fund managers are learning to distinguish between good and bad information technology stocks. After buying indiscriminately in the first half of the year and then selling during the recent market turmoil, a premier league of IT services companies is beginning to emerge.

Logica fits squarely into that category. It is strong in three fast-expanding markets - telecoms, finance and utilities - which accounted for 70 per cent of sales last year. It also has an ever-expanding international spread. This gives Logica the opportunity to sell the same service to different customers in different countries, taking the group closer to its target of 10 per cent operating margins.

What's more, Logica's growth is not so dependent on the need to upgrade systems for the year 2000 computer bug or the European single currency. Instead it is largely being driven by the introduction of competition in the electricity industry, the explosive expansion of mobile phone services and the growth of on-line banking and electronic commerce.

This is clearly paying off. In the year to June, operating profits rose by 27 per cent to £35.3m on sales up 28 per cent to £431.8m.

Another impressive feature was cash flow. Before acquisitions, Logica generated almost £50m of cash in the year, which will stand it in good stead when searching for acquisitions. Martin Read, the chief executive, is hunting for deals that improve Logica's presence in the US and Germany, or bring the company a new product that it can sell to its global customer base.

Analysts yesterday edged up their forecasts to about £55m. That puts Logica shares, which closed up 147.5p to 1,822.5p yesterday compared to their 2,300p peak earlier this year, on a forward earnings multiple of 34.

That's still an unjustified discount to Logica's peers such as CMG and Sema. Buy.

INVESTMENT

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

LOGICA: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £1,340m, share price: 1822.5p (+147.5p)

Trading record	94	95	96	97	98
Turnover (£m)	209.9	250.1	284.8	338.5	472.96
Pre-tax profits (£m)	12.8	19.4	23.7	28.15	41.8
Earnings per share (p)	13.7	21.2	26.5	30.3	42.3
Dividends per share (p)	4.9	6.1	7.6	9.4	11.75

Turnover Analysis by client sector £m	Share price, pence
150	2500
100	2000
50	1500
0	1000
	500
	0
	93 94 95 96 97 98

Steady as she goes for ABP

ASSOCIATED British Ports is steering a steady course in the face of turbulent market conditions. In the first half, the UK's largest port operator has been buffeted by a slowdown in its core ports business.

Exports of steel from its terminals in South Wales have plummeted as manufacturers struggled under the weight of the soaring pound. Shipping of animal feeds was also down due to the wet summer. If low-temperature oil exports are excluded, the total tonnage handled by ABP's ports in the first six months was slightly below last year.

Indeed the ports' unit results would have been below last year had it not been for the release of a £3.8m provision. Yet the company still managed to increase profits by 11 per cent to £27m on turnover up 33 per cent to £173.3m.

Much of this performance was due to a robust increase in ABP's property operations. Property investment rose by 16.4 per cent in the half, contributing a healthy £7.8m. Last year's radical cost-cutting programme, which saw the departure of 10 per cent of ABP's workforce, also helped to run a tight ship.

Despite this resilient performance, a few clouds are gathering over the second half. The ports division is unlikely to show much of an upturn, given UK manufacturers' dire conditions. In addition the acquisition of American Port Services, the US dock operator bought in May for £108m, will dip earnings this year and next.

On the positive side, investors can look forward to a £58m share buyback, part of the £100m capital restructuring announced last year. Property will also continue to power ahead and a few disposals should help the cash flow.

ABP shares, down 13.5p to 270.5p yesterday, have fallen a long way in recent months. They are now on 12 times expected 1998 earnings of around £13m. At these levels, they look like good long-term value.

Signet gets the balance right

SHARES IN Signet, the jewellery group, have had a rough ride in the last few months in line with most other small and medium-sized retailers. But this should not obscure the sound work being undertaken by Jim McAdam and his team.

After posting its first full-year profit in seven years in 1997, the H Samuel and Ernest Jones retailer has continued its progress. Half-year profits jumped from £1.9m to £12.1m and like-for-like sales rose by a creditable 7 per cent.

Debits are down from £214m to £145m and although there is no half-year dividend, the possible resumption of a buyout will be considered at year-end.

For a business that was once being pushed to sell its American operation, the group's geographic balance now looks like a strength rather than a weakness.

In the UK, trade was affected by higher interest rates and weakening consumer confidence. In the last 18 weeks of the half, same-store sales fell at both H Samuel and Ernest Jones chains. But the US, which now accounts for two-thirds of group sales, was far more robust: same-store sales there grew by 10 per cent and its large Jared outlets are the market leader in mall stores. Signet is now the market leader in US jewellery with a share of 4.5 per cent.

On full-year profit forecasts of £8.5m, the shares - up 5p to 35.75p yesterday - trade on a forward rating of 10.

There is a danger of the US cycle turning against the company, but the stock still looks good value.

IN BRIEF

Slowdown hits chemicals sales

SHARES IN Albright & Wilson, the specialty chemicals group, fell 10 per cent to a low of 97.5p yesterday after the company reported a 9 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £27.7m for the six months to 30 June.

Analysts were surprised by signs that slower growth in the US and UK economies is already having an adverse effect on sales in the phosphorous derivatives and acrylics division.

Group turnover rose by 6 per cent to £419m and operating profits rose 1 per cent to £33.6m but interest charges more than doubled to £6m.

On board at Mail

THE BOARD of Daily Mail & General Trust yesterday elected Jonathan Harmsworth, the Fourth Viscount Rothermere, as chairman of the company. Paul Dacre, the editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers, was appointed a director of DMGT.

SGB ups profits

SERVICES GROUP SGB, which was floated in June last year, increased profits before tax by 30 per cent to £8.6m in the first half of 1998 on a turnover of £134.7m, an increase of just 2 per cent. Capital expenditure rose by 60 per cent to £13m.

The UK, North America and Middle East are expected to continue to provide a demand for quality work and the board is confident that prospects are good. An interim dividend of 2.9p is being paid for the first time.

British Fittings

SALES AT British Fittings, the distributors of pipeline equipment, rose by 12 per cent to £42m and pre-tax profit by 2.5 per cent to £2.48m in the half-year to June. Exceptional costs of £476,000 were provided for, against gains of £335,000 last year. Cheap imports have increased competition and prospects in the UK remain uncertain, said the chairman, Michael Boreham.

PWC clips the vultures' wings

AS RUSSIA grapples with its financial crisis, rumours reach me that British insolvency practitioners have been flying in to sniff business. Stuff and nonsense, says Stephen Taylor, the partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) in charge of drafting corporate recovery people overseas.

"If you started shipping hundreds of troops out there, banging on doors and hanging around like vultures, you wouldn't get very far," says Mr Taylor.

"We don't do that. We've already got quite a large presence in Russia, mostly in Moscow," he says. PWC are advising mainly Western clients in Russia, as well as a few Russian companies.

"It's a bit like the early days of the East Asian crisis," he adds. British insolvency specialists have played a big role there. "You can spend an awful lot of time speaking to the wrong people. It's not clear yet who the right people are."

Probably more important to PWC, which has the UK's biggest corporate recovery practice, is the recent acquisition of a German insolvency firm, Schultze and Braun, says Mr Taylor.

"The German insolvency scene is still very fragmented and lawyer-driven. This is the first move by a big player into the German market," he says.

And after all, he adds, the German economy is much bigger than Britain's, meaning there's more work to do. It is also bigger than Russia's, of course - that now ranks alongside Denmark's.

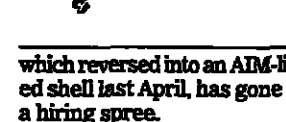
PWC is looking forward to working with some new German insolvency legislation which becomes effective next spring, which they think will favour accountants over lawyers.

As for Russia, it also has some new corporate recovery legislation. Rather worryingly, however, this was introduced on 1 April.

TEATHER & GREENWOOD, the private client stockbroker

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK



which reversed into an AIM-listed shell last April, has gone on a hiring spree.

In comes Martin Cross, a highly rated financial analyst from UBS, Rowan Morgan, a retail analyst from Nikko Europe, Russell Cook and Martin Lampshire from Granville & Co and Craig Leppard from First Equity.

Although Teather & Greenwood dates back to 1886, it was only two years ago that the owner/partners decided to grow its corporate finance, institutional sales and private client stockbroking operations.

While Jeremy Delmar-Morgan still presides as chief executive, the former head of research, Derek Terrington, recently went off to help Asda build a new fund management business. Guy Field, an old Teather hand who spent two years at UBS, came back to replace Mr Terrington, and since the firm reversed into Northern Residential Property the value of the business has grown to an estimated £4m.

All of which is quite a contrast to life at the old UBS, according to Mr Cross. "It's very different to what I'm used to. We've got about 150 staff and about 10 analysts. There are very nice people here, and it's growing."

This is also a contrast to the rather sour end of UBS at the hands of Warburg Dillon Read. Mr Cross says he really got the message about the "merger" when he saw a brochure produced by WDR "after the dust had settled". Out of 60 old UBS

analysts it listed just six, and most of those were comparatively junior.

JENNIFER PANTLING is also leaving Granville, the independent brokers, in order to join the corporate finance division of Rea Brothers, the merchant bank.

Ms Pantling, 47, started off at Lawrence Prust as a mining and oils analyst, then entered corporate finance at Smith New Court. She had a spell with Adam & Partners, the corporate finance boutique and then went to Granville, where she was a director of corporate finance.

Ms Pantling will report to Nick Wells, who heads corporate finance at Rea Brothers. The bank is about to get a new chairman, William Salomon, a representative of the family that owns the business.

Mr McIntosh, shortly to retire as vice chairman in HSBC Investment Bank and also a non-executive director of IMI, joins the Board as a non-exec. Mr McIntosh will sit on the nomination, remuneration and audit committees.

NOT MANY firms of solicitors are into asset management, but Lawrence Graham's investment management business is the biggest of any London law outfit, and it has just hired a former manager from Hambros Private Banking to boost its efforts in this area.

James Sageman joins as managing director of Lawrence Graham Investment Management Services. The 270-year-old firm has around £80m under management and aims to grow this rapidly.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months
UK	1.0000	2.8189	2.8112
Australia	20.166	20.130	20.064
Canada	59.124	59.519	59.588
Denmark	12.544	12.520	12.518
ECU	10.920	10.893	10.840
France	1.4563	1.4522	1.4447
Germany	8.7186	8.6889	8.6347
Italy	9.610	9.577	9.518
Japan	2.8661	2.8500	2.851
Netherlands	12.777	12.777	12.738
Portugal	1.4935	1.4925	1.4852
Spain	166.331	166.331	166.331
Sweden	1.3511	1.3493	1.3455
Switzerland	1.6615	1.6595	1.6557

INTEREST RATES

Country	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	7.50%	7.50%	7.50%	7.50%
Germany	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
France	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Italy	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Spain	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Sweden	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Switzerland	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

BOND YIELDS

Country	3 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year
Australia	4.93	0.02	4.96	0.11	5.23
Canada	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Denmark	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
France	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Germany	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Italy	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Japan	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Netherlands	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Spain	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Sweden	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42
Switzerland	5.32	0.09	5.58	0.06	5.42

LIFFE FINANCIAL FUTURES

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Floor	Open Interest
Long Gilt	Sep-98	112.57	112.65	296.00	5302.00
5 Yr Gilt	Sep-98	105.65	105.65	...	581.00
German Bund	Sep-98	112.79	112.79	...	0.00
Italian Bond	Sep-98	123.01	123.01	...	0.00
Japan Govt Bd	Sep-98	135.63	135.70	966.00	0.00
3 Mth Sterling	Sep-98	92.53	92.54	4684.00	15282.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	92.86	92.76	54367.00	180641.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	96.51	96.53	96.50	41880.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	96.47	96.47	96.46	3042.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	95.04	95.06	94.88	27554.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	96.26	96.28	96.19	23335.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	99.50	99.50	99.50	59962.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	98.37	98.38	98.22	11717.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	98.22	98.26	98.24	76192.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	95.85	95.86	95.84	613.00
3 Mth Eurodollar	Sep-98	95.85	95.85	95.85	0.00
FTSE 100	Sep-98	5313.00	5313.00	5250.00	41300.00
Settlement Price	5311.30				176577.00

LIFFE FTSE 100 INDEX OPTION

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put
2250	329	37	40	70	392	158
2300	222	31	61	39	274	121
2350	187	26	76	38	220	109
2400	153	35	82	27	190	94

ENERGY AT A GLANCE

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Floor	Open Interest
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32
Crude Oil	Sep-98	14.32	14.32	14.32	14.32

INDUSTRIAL METALS

Contract	Settlement</
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SPORT

Hard truth of making deal with Red Devils

SOME MONTHS ago, a friend in this trade called from California to ask whether Rupert Murdoch had attempted anything over here comparable with his imminent purchase of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball club. "No," I replied, "but it's going to happen."

A pretty safe bet for anyone with half an ear to the ground was that Manchester United would end up in Murdoch's toy cupboard. Once his company, BSkyB, obtained a share in Manchester United Television, the country's first seven-days-a-week club channel, you could see it coming.

I'm not putting this forward with the "I told you so" cynicism of an older generation. It's just that the only thing I found surprising about

news of Murdoch's latest acquisition was the shocked response to Manchester United's capitulation.

The trepidation felt by United's supporters, their sense of betrayal, is understandable. But people who are presently banging on about a conflict of interest and the threat to English football raised by Murdoch's latest manoeuvre have mounted only token resistance to the march of market forces.

It is all well and good for the broadcaster and politician David Mellor to describe the Manchester United deal as "a cardinal act of folly", but his close affiliation with Chelsea - whose admission prices at Stamford Bridge are the highest in the Premier League, operating on the basis that if you want the

best you've got to pay for it - hardly supports the idea of a people's champion.

The worst nightmare for English football is that many of its best traditions and values will be torches in the cause of what many mistakenly suppose to be progress. The clue to its future lies, I believe, in the growing and perhaps irreversible conviction of corporate influences that elitism is the only way forward.

For the majority of football supporters, dreams are now confined to marginally improved status. "I still go along because the club is in my blood," one recently said, "but I've given up on the belief that we could really get somewhere, perhaps even win the Premiership."



KEN JONES

Last week, a businessman of my acquaintance refused desperate pleas for help from two Third Division clubs on the brink of bankruptcy. "It didn't make any sense to

get involved," he said. "It wasn't necessary to study their accounts to know that it is only a matter of time, and not a long time either, before they go under."

You only have to ponder for an instant what has happened at Manchester United to realise what the takeover implies; a philosophy based solely on profit and an ignorance of history. As to the institution of tycoonery itself, I recommend you to the fact that demands are raised in accordance with investment.

We have heard and read so much about the scale of Murdoch's involvement at Old Trafford that it might not be a bad idea to point out the outcome so far of his move on the Los Angeles Dodgers.

If, admittedly, occupying a much lesser status in the National Baseball League's Western Conference than Manchester United do in the Premier League, the Dodgers have not prospered since the O'Malley family, owners for generations, sold out for an estimated \$500m to Murdoch's Fox TV network.

A restructuring programme that saw the payroll spiral from \$45m to \$60m, when emerging young players were dumped to make way for ready-made stars, is unlikely to bring better than a mid-table position. "You can't say that it's been a disaster," Tom Cushman of the San Diego Union-Tribune said, "but nothing much has happened unless you count the fact that both the manager, Bill Russell, and the

general manager, Fred Clare, were sacked - only the third time this has happened in more than forty years."

The hard rule in these things, and very hard indeed for anyone who has grown up with football as a game not a business, is to stop kidding the people with the notion that investment takes their feelings into consideration. It does nothing of the sort.

There is something the people can do about this beyond expressing disapproval. They can stay away from games, turn in their season tickets and tell the clubs where to stick their disgracefully overpriced merchandise. That will not happen, of course. They are hooked - and Murdoch knows it.

Football: BSkyB's controversial takeover of Manchester United takes the game into a new era, but at what cost?

Profits and power are the new goal

THE RETURN of *Dream Team*, BSkyB's football soap about the mythical Manchester United, has now been thoroughly usurped. Why bother making programmes about fictional clubs when you can own the real thing?

The surprise about Murdoch's United plc, however, a dream-team collaboration between the world's biggest media mogul and football's biggest club, is that no-one saw it coming. It is the inevitable consequence of the sport's mutually dependent, financially lucrative relationship with television.

Money has always talked in football. The first champions, Preston, Everton, Sunderland and Aston Villa, pioneered professionalism and contained a significant number of well-renumerated Scottish imports. Now, however, it is so loud that little else can be heard above the sound of dollars being counted - and how telling that the deal was formally announced in an American accent, that of Mark Booth, BSkyB's chief executive. Booth, incidentally, dismissed as irrelevant the question as to whether Rupert Murdoch had ever been to Old Trafford. For most fans that is the most important question of all.

The deal means the wealth gap that was opened in 1985, when big clubs benefited from being allowed to keep gate receipts from home matches, is now unbridgeable.

The consequence is a diminution of the game's uncertainty, one of its greatest attractions. If the prospect of another club rising through the ranks like Wimbledon already appeared unlikely, the thought of United even sinking as far as Manchester City have done is now inconceivable.

Of course, the takeover must be referred to the Office of Fair Trading but even if the Government had the political will to stop it - which seems unlikely



GLENN MOORE

FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

given previous kow-towing to Murdoch - it is hard to see upon what grounds.

Nor are the supporters likely to stop it. The core support, the locally-born, fortnightly attenders, who first went to Old Trafford with their fathers, may be against it, but the mass of United's fans are less sure. Many will see the deal as a chance to make Manchester United Europe's best performer on the pitch as well as on the balance sheet. Already, the head of the Australian supporters' club has heralded the deal. It would mean, he hoped, a chance to see every United match live in the comfort of his own home.

For this is the modern Manchester United. They are a global brand, championed in St Ives as well as Salford, Faridabad as well as Farnworth. Their fathers supported the local team, or knew nothing of a far-away team in red. For fans who see Manchester United as their personal thread in the fabric of English football this looks a bad deal; for those who regard them as a source of reflected glory it is a good one.

Certainly, Manchester United ought now to be even more pre-eminent, at least until other clubs are bought up by multinationals. No longer should they have to hulk at either high transfer fees or wage demands. Yet they may still do so. Alex

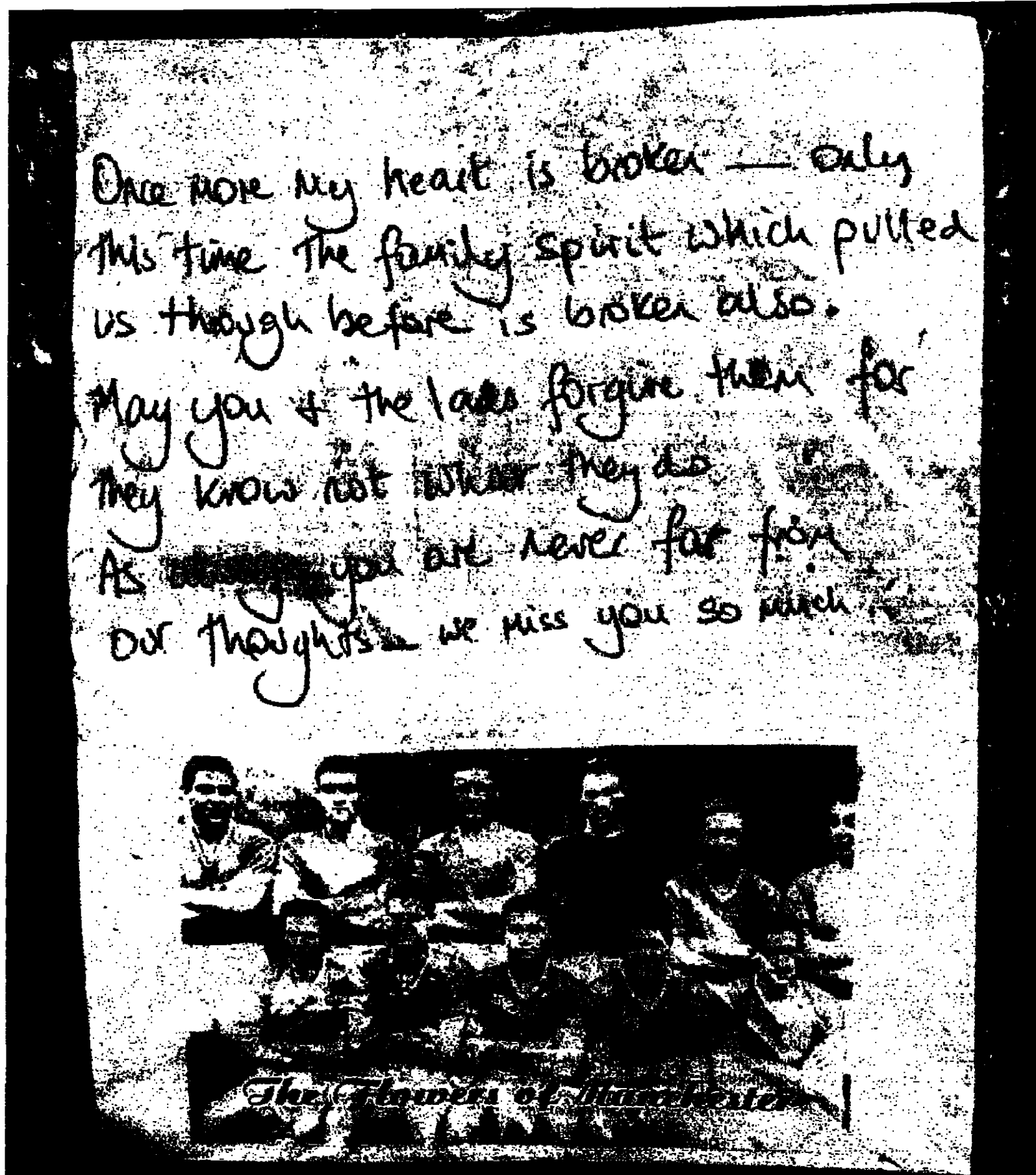
Ferguson, more than most, knows that teams win titles, not individuals. Having a collection of highly paid stars is no guarantee of success and United are likely to improve the team by increments rather than with a splash. That is assuming Ferguson is left to manage in peace. If not, this instinctive socialist may walk.

Ferguson has been careful to limit his comments to praising BSkyB's football coverage, a feature few football folk would disagree with. His views on the deal are unknown, but one question he might ask would be "Why?" As Alex Fynn, the football analyst and author, said yesterday: "United already have a far greater turnover than the likes of Juventus. That they are not pulling their financial weight is due to the innate conservatism of the board, rather than a lack of money."

Fynn expects that to change but is concerned about the sting in the deal. This could mean putting BSkyB's television interests ahead of those of the club and the game. Though Martin Edwards, United's chief executive, said the club would be allowed to take its own view in television negotiations, Murdoch's track record suggests such promises of independence are worthless. Besides, Murdoch has not bought United for its profitability alone. This deal is about influence and control; it will accelerate the European league and cement BSkyB's role in its coverage.

Such an investment increases the likelihood that the European league will effectively be a closed shop. While promotion and relegation are imperative to traditional fans, newer and younger ones may accept this more easily than is thought. While Britain is too small to support a franchise-based superleague in the manner of American football's NFL, Europe is big enough and wealthy enough.

When the bulk of the in-



A heartfelt inscription from a lamenting Manchester United supporter that was left at the foot of Sir Matt Busby's statue in Manchester yesterday, following confirmation that BSkyB's £623.4m takeover bid has been accepted at Old Trafford. Peter Wilcock/PA

come is through television viewers on pay-per-view, a club's location, and local support, matters less. This is not so far-fetched. Juventus have

already played European matches away from Turin. The time may come when everybody supports two teams; the local one they watch in the

flesh on a Saturday afternoon and the European one they follow through the cathode-ray tube on a Sunday night. In time, the superclubs may even

become ersatz national teams. This is football, Jim, but not as we knew it. There has always been change in the game but it has usually crept up on

us. This week, like the lifting of the maximum wage, the first Sky TV deal and the Bosman ruling, will come to be seen as a landmark.

United deal 'the first of many'

THE TAKEOVER of Manchester United by BSkyB - should it go ahead unchallenged - is likely to be the first of several similar deals between England's largest clubs and media companies, according to City analysts.

"This is part of an inevitable endgame," said William Davies, a football analyst with the fund managers, Albert E Sharp. "If these [Premier League] clubs want to stay at the top, not just in England but in Europe, they need these kind of relationships [with large parent companies]."

Davies added that potential buyers will wait for the United deal to go through before making approaches to other clubs, but that those approaches will come sooner rather than later.

BY NICK HARRIS

Analysts agree on the elite group most likely to be targeted in the near future.

"I think you've got to look at the big franchises - national brands with international potential," said Nick Batram, football analyst at the stockbrokers, Greig Middleton. "Arsenal and Liverpool would have to be top of anyone's shopping list."

Both clubs are privately owned, a fact that until now may have made them unlikely targets for takeovers. At Arsenal, where Peter Hill-Wood has been the chairman since 1982 and his father the chairman before him, the major shareholders are men who made their money in banking and property and have strong long-term links to the

club. The situation is similar at Liverpool, where the Moores family have been in control for generations. Neither would normally be open to offers.

"If someone came up with a £400m cash offer, it could be a different matter," said Batram. In football's new economic climate, he added: "Everyone's got their price."

Liverpool and Arsenal are certainly likely to be targets then, but their owners can still ultimately decline propositions. The case is not the same elsewhere, where stock market listings make it compulsory under law for the directors to consider offers. In this category, Aston Villa, Leeds, Chelsea, Newcastle and Tottenham are seen as being the most attractive buys. Of these, Villa and Tottenham

might attract the most interest, said Batram, as their primary football-based activities would come free from the baggage of property and other interests that Chelsea, Newcastle and Leeds have in their portfolios. "Spurs have fallen on hard times but it's still a strong brand name with a big supporter base," said Batram, adding that now Alan Sugar has indicated he may be in the mood to sell, Tottenham could be in the hands of new - probably media-linked - owners before long.

Leeds, with institutional ownership giving no protection from corporate bids, are equally vulnerable to imminent approaches.

So who will be doing the buying? Joe Lewis, the billionaire financier with connections to

Time Warner and stakes in several European clubs already including Rangers, is one candidate. So too are other multinationals, possibly including Disney. A host of British television companies, led by Granada and Carlton will also be interested, as will cable companies like Telewest, which has a stronghold in the North-east.

"Don't rule out the cable companies," said Batram. "They may not have been big players until now, but they're looking for growth and consolidation."

The future for football, it seems, will be as much in broadcasting boardrooms as on the pitch. Whether that will be a good thing for the game remains to be seen, but BSkyB's deal with United will certainly not be the last of its kind.

PREMIER LEAGUE BUSINESS PROFILES

ARSENAL Majority shareholders: Danny Fiszman (28 per cent); Richard Carr (26.3); David Dein (Vice chairman, 21.3). Chairman: Peter Hill-Wood since 1982, and his father before him. Stock market listed: No. Value: £70m	EVERTON Owner: Peter Johnson (66 per cent). Chairman: Peter Johnson. Stock market listed: No.	NOTTINGHAM FOREST Majority shareholders: Institutional investors. Chairman: Philip Scar. Stock market listed: 1997. Value: £16.5m
ASTON VILLA Majority shareholders: Elits family (40 per cent). Chairman: Doug Elits since 1968. Stock market listed: 1996. Value: £70m	LEEDS UNITED Majority shareholders: City Institutions. Chairman: Peter Risdale. Stock market listed: 1989. Value: £42m	SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY Majority shareholders: Charterhouse development (36 per cent). Chairman: David Richards. Stock market listed: No.
BLACKBURN Owner: Jack Walker (99 per cent). Chairman: Robert Coor. Stock market listed: No.	LEICESTER CITY Majority shareholders: Institutional investors. Chairman: John Elson. Stock market listed: October 1997. Value: £12.5m	SOUTHAMPTON Majority shareholders: City Institutions. Chairman: Rupert Lowe. Stock market listed: 1997. Value: £13m
CHAMPION Majority shareholders: Murray family (34 per cent); Martin Simons (11). Chairman: Murray (plc), Simons (FC). Stock market listed: March 1996. Value: £16.6m	LIVERPOOL Owner: David Moores (57 per cent). Chairman: David Moores. Stock market listed: No.	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR Majority shareholders: Alan Sugar (40.5 per cent). Chairman: Alan Sugar. Stock market listed: 1983. Value: £54m
CHELSEA Majority shareholders: Ken Bates and offshore trusts. Chairman: Ken Bates, since 1981. Stock market listed: March 1996. Value: £121m (as part of Chelsea Village plc)	MANCHESTER UNITED Majority shareholders: Edwards family (17.5 per cent); pending BSkyB takeover. Chairman: Martin Edwards. Stock market listed: June 1991. Value: £623m	WEST HAM UNITED Majority shareholders: Terence Brown (34 per cent). Chairman: Terence Brown. Stock market listed: No.
COVENTRY CITY Majority shareholders: Offshore trusts (70 per cent). Chairman: Lloyd Richardson. Stock market listed: No.	MIDDLESBROUGH Owner: Steve Gibson (75 per cent). Chairman: Steve Gibson. Stock market listed: No.	WINDLETON Owner: Bantyre Ventures (British Virgin Islands) (99.9 per cent). Chairman: Stanley Reed. Stock market listed: No.
DERBY COUNTY Owner: Lord Pickering (62 per cent). Chairman: Lord Pickering. Stock market listed: No.	NEWCASTLE UNITED Majority shareholders: Douglas Hall (57 per cent). Chairman: Denis Cassidy (plc) Freddie Shepherd (PA). Stock market listed: April 1997. Value: £102m	

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Blade gets slice of the big time

Julian Herbert Allsop

DONCASTER

the defeat by Miss Amanpuri. She has only a length to make up and Luca Cumani will have her stronger this time.

Impossible to reach heights of Beeswing

end of the sort Double Trigger can expect. At the age of 21, at the Cheshire stud to which she had just walked, two months off foaling, she was beaten to death by an unbalanced groom.

HYPERION

Fortnite: Seems effective at 61 to 71 and just Newmarket in July with Fleetwing 4th. Usually **Fortnite:** Hard to fancy on recent form and has a Lady this season. Has an absence of over 3 **Risque Lady:** Won twice as a 2-y-o and has

centre may be a disadvantage.

VERDICT: Daunting Lady would have scored a victory and it seemed a strange decision to run her. Lady Doomes will be fresher than most have been in her Yarmouth win amounts to nothing she said. **SPANISH FERN**, another who has been in the strength and could hardly have been more impressive when she won in a fast time. She again has

(Listed) (CLASS A) £16,250 add

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WINTER RAMBO 250 (A) Subst. Rec. L
MOLLEY (7) (C) W. (A) Chipping L
SAINT EXPRESS (13) (C) (D) S. Hall
SMOOTH SAILING (2) (C) (A) R. Par
SALTY JACK (20) (C) (B) S. Season
DISTINCTIVE DREAM (20) (B) L. Broom
KING OF PERU (1) (C) (A) C. S. D. R
NOVAL RESUL (7) (C) (A) B. B. S. S.
REDUCELABLE (USA) (1) (C) (B) (D)
QUEEN'S PAGEANT (121) (A) R. Robert
PAR REMOVED (12) (C) (A) V. C. W. M
SHIRAZ FACE (10) (C) (A) J. V. P. F
WESTMAN'S WEIGH (10) (C) (A) E. W.

over this trip and only a neck behind Dashing

4-280 BRIT KALDOUN (2) (Mares) Jazayir
PIERREFONT (4) John Wilmer & Nicholas
THE WOODCOCK (9) Mrs J R Mouchell
FITTING: 7-1 Concorat, Royal Regent, 14 Redoubtable
4-4 1-3 Mister Nasser, Salsar Express, Style Drive
7-7: Safe 4 or 3 2 Weight 5-1 Ex (A) Shilly down (2)
FORM GP
Concorat: Won off a mark of 64 late last year.
This year: Cauter consistent, but seems too tight
to win at present.
Royal Regent: Won at Newbury last year.
This year: Usually held up, but has not shown much
form since his first start in a handicap at Newbury last
year.
Redoubtable: Usually held up, but has not shown much
form since his first start in a handicap at Newbury last
year.
Mister Nasser: Won 1st time round at Farnham last
year.
Salsar Express: Won 1st time round at Farnham last
year.
Style Drive: Won 1st time round at Farnham last
year.
Shilly: Usually held up, but has not shown much
form since his first start in a handicap at Newbury last
year.
Ex (A): Won 1st time round at Farnham last year.
Shilly: Usually held up, but has not shown much
form since his first start in a handicap at Newbury last
year.

CE OF WALES CUP **C4**

[illegible]

Flori, Mencer, 12-1 Capitalist, Colonel Moscow

VERDICT: A tight handicap in which ROYAL MOOTH won recently after changing stables, made a superb record in rejuvenating handicapper's penalty for last week's York win the fast pace. **Far Removed** looks well handicapped.

Double for Dutch sprinter

CYCLING

JEROEN BLIJLEVENS had the edge in a sprint finish in Murcia yesterday to claim his second stage win in the Tour of Spain.

The Dutchman pipped Giovanni Lombardi, the Italian finishing second for the third time in four days, with Germany's Sven Teutenberg third in the 165.5km (103 miles) stage from Ojula del Rio.

The stage came down to a sprint finish after several breaks were thwarted. The best came early, Italy's Elio Aggiano escaping after 8km and opening a lead of one and a half minutes before being overhauled.

The continuing drug scandal plaguing the sport claimed another victim yesterday, when France's Philippe Gaumont was pulled out of the Tour of Spain by his team, Cofidis, after reportedly testing positive for the steroid nandrolone. Frenchman Philippe Gaumont failed a test in May but will not be punished because of differing doping rules.

The French federation said the Cofidis rider had a level of nandrolone exceeding the limit considered by most federations and by the International Olympic Committee as revealing drug taking. But the International Cycling Union (UCI) tolerates a higher level of nandrolone. As a result, Gaumont was not even told of the result of the test.

Blijlevens, who won at Cadix on Monday, did nothing to disturb the leader, Fabrizio Guidi. The Italian still leads overall by two seconds from the 1995 winner, Laurent Jalabert of France.



Georg Totschnig, of Austria, is a picture of pain as he tries to recover from the effects a heavy fall during the fifth stage of the Tour of Spain yesterday

AP

Everton line up £4.5m Bakayoko

FOOTBALL

BY ALAN NIXON

WALTER SMITH, the Everton manager, is likely to sign Ibrahima Bakayoko in a £4.5m deal next week.

Smith has persuaded the Ivory Coast international striker to go to Goodison Park, despite interest in him from Arsenal. A work permit should arrive next week, with Bakayoko then flying in from his French club, Montpellier.

Smith thinks Bakayoko, 21, can partner – or possibly replace – Duncan Ferguson in attack. A fast and skilful striker, he has been a major

success in France in the past couple of seasons and should adjust to the English game.

The Bakayoko signing will take Smith's spending to an extraordinary £16m since his arrival from Rangers, but the manager now hopes to clear up whether the Italian striker, Igor Protti, is also interested in coming to Goodison Park. The £5.5m Lazio striker, who would join on 12 months' loan, has twice failed to arrive for talks despite all his travel arrangements being organised for him.

Another Everton transfer, which would bring the Tranmere goalkeeper, Steve Simonsen, should be

completed by the end of the week. The move has been held up because of Tranmere's internal problems over the decision by their chairman, Frank Corle, to sell up. It has also been complicated by the fact that the Birkenhead club's other goalkeeper, the Welsh international Danny Coyne, damaged his groin during the 0-0 draw at Queen's Park Rangers this week. Everton may offer their reserve keeper, Paul Gerrard, on loan to Tranmere so that the Simonsen move can be completed.

Ron Atkinson has been lined up to take over as the coach of South Africa as a replacement for Philippe Troussier, who took the country to the World Cup finals. Atkinson has been out of work since not having his contract renewed as manager of Sheffield Wednesday at the end of last season despite keeping them in the Premiership after replacing David Pleat. He confirmed that he is due to have talks later this week with South African officials about what would be his first step into international football.

Atkinson has been linked with similar posts in the past, most notably the Wales job during his days as manager of Aston Villa in the mid 1990s. However, this time he would

not have to worry about combining club and country commitments and has the experience and charisma to give South African football a shot in the arm. The South Africans were expected to make a favourable impression in France 1998 but did not win a game in failing to qualify from their group.

Atkinson said: "I have had talks with South African officials and will be meeting them later this week. Who knows if I will be the new coach? But talks have progressed to the stage where a meeting with officials would be worthwhile."

Southampton, who have made a poor start to the season, are mak-

ing a record £3m bid for Steve Watson, the versatile Newcastle United player. Southampton's manager, David Jones, has asked Ruud Gullit to sell him the Georgian and is willing to pay a high price in order to give his team a lift.

If Watson was sold, he would be the first major departure from Newcastle since the arrival of Gullit at St James' Park. Gullit ideally wants time to assess his squad, but Jones needs to strengthen his side quickly and is keen to talk to Watson over the weekend. Newcastle play Southampton on Saturday, so no deal will go through before then, but a decision on Watson's future will be made shortly. Jones has money left from the sale of the striker Kevin Davies to Blackburn Rovers and would also be in a position to trade off other players to raise cash.

Watson would be an ideal addition to the Southampton squad as he can play at right-back, left-back, centre-back and in midfield. He was an England squad man before injury held disrupted his career.

Typical of Southampton's problems, their most expensive signing to date, David Hirst, a £2m buy from Sheffield Wednesday, is one of the players on their injury list at the moment.

Celtic act to end bonus controversy

CELTIC PLAYERS and management yesterday resolved to end the bitter internal strife that has rocked the Scottish champions by enlisting a top agent to act as a mediator on all future financial discussions.

The move, endorsed by the managing director Fergus McCann and the general manager Jock Brown, calls a truce on the row over bonus payments which marred the build-up to the club's recent European Cup exit. Paul Stretford, of Proactive Sports Management Ltd, is the third party who will now play a key role in restoring working relations between disillusioned players and the Parkhead hierarchy.

McCann, while not divulging what bonus agreement has been agreed ahead of the club's UEFA Cup first round tie against the Portuguese side, Vitoria Guimaraes, next week, stressed he hoped the matter would now be put to rest. "The recent dispute regarding bonus plans is no longer an issue of conflict and relations are good," he said.

"Indeed, Jock Brown has encouraged the players to appoint a representative to deal with any financial issues regarding their work as a group, and they have done so. I am assured by Tom Boyd that all future matters will be discussed amicably and in confidence, and the management will take the same approach."

Boyd, Celtic's captain, was also happy that, with the long-running saga now apparently reaching an amicable conclusion, he and his team-mates are free to concentrate on regaining their championship-winning form of last term. "The players welcome the approach taken by

the management to resolve recent issues," he said. "In future, all matters will be discussed and resolved inside the club."

"Paul Stretford, of Pro-Active Sports Management Ltd, has been appointed to act on behalf of the players group on all future financial matters," Boyd added. "The players are pleased to move forward on the basis agreed. None of the players will speak any further on the issue of bonus payments. The players and management want the entire concentration to be focused on bringing Celtic success on the field, starting with Saturday's match against Kilmarnock."

McCann, meanwhile, insisted he has no intention of "selling out" to corporate investors when he relinquishes control of the club next spring. He admitted he had received several approaches to sell his 51 per cent controlling interest in the Scottish champions. One report suggested a Japanese banking firm, Nomura International, were ready to offer McCann around £30m for a majority shareholding in the club.

However, the Scots-born Canadian, who will end his controversial Parkhead reign by the end of the season, reaffirmed his commitment to placing the club in the hands of current shareholders and supporters.

"There has been a lot of speculation about companies and individuals claiming to buy my shares," McCann said. "I do not intend to respond to this. My position is that I will do what I consider is best for Celtic Football Club and I believe my divestment plan, namely to give first refusal to Celtic shareholders, fits that aim."



Berti Vogts has lost his head in a monument in Mönchengladbach celebrating the heyday of the town's team, Borussia

Ribbeck takes over as German national coach

THE FORMER Bayern Munich coach, Erich Ribbeck, is taking from Berti Vogts as coach to the German national side, the country's Football Federation announced yesterday. Ribbeck, 61, previously coached Kaiserslautern and Leverkusen as well as Bayern.

Ribbeck's assistant will be the former Real Madrid and Germany midfielder player, Uli Stielke, who is now 44.

Meanwhile, Vogts not only lost his job as Germany's soccer coach but also his head. Police revealed that Vogts' head was missing from a monument in Mönchengladbach, where he played club soccer.

Germany's mass-circulation Bild newspaper claimed the monument had been vandalized after his resignation on Monday, but police said the head had been wobbly for some time and fell off two weeks ago when city workers came to look at it. It has been taken away for repairs.

The monument depicts Vogts and two other former players of the Borussia Mönchengladbach glory days in the 1970s – Gunter Netzer and Herbert Wimmer.

The former Dutch national coach, Thijs Libregts, is to sign a four-year contract to coach Nigeria.

"Libregts will arrive here tonight to seal the deal and sign the contract papers on Thursday," said Abdulmumini Aminu, the head of the Nigerian Football Association said yesterday. No financial details were given. Last week Libregts, 57, said he would come to Nigeria to finalise the deal. He was approached last month to replace Serbian Bora Milutinovic, whose contract ended after the World Cup finals in July.

Aminu said he expected Libregts to take the national team to new heights, adding: "We believe in him, that he can do it."

As Olympic champions, much was expected from Nigeria at the World Cup but their campaign ended in the second round with a 4-1 defeat by Denmark. Aminu said Libregts' first assignment would be preparing the team for the 2000 African Cup of Nations in Zimbabwe. Nigeria face Burkina Faso on 4 October in their first qualifying match.

The Swedish Football Association have announced that no more international club matches will be held in Stockholm because of the high police costs of manning them.

"We give up. We have not made a formal decision yet but the mood in Stockholm is easy to interpret," Lagrell told the daily newspaper Svenska Dagbladet. "It's a matter of politics and internal fights in the police core about money. There is a lot of grumbling."

Policing of last May's European Cup Winners' Cup final in Stockholm in which Chelsea beat VfB Stuttgart 1-0 cost police an estimated five million Swedish crowns (£385,000), with about 1,000 police on duty.

About 13,000 British and 4,000 German fans descended on the Swedish capital for the Chelsea-Stuttgart match. Eight people were arrested in incidents before and after the game.

Police spokesman Claes Cassel said it was a cultural loss for Stockholm that international club matches would no longer be played in the city. "But as police I think it is good that we get rid of some of these problems," he said.

The Swedish FA will in future stage international club matches in Gothenburg on the west coast, but major internationals, such as last Saturday's European championship qualifier between Sweden and England, will still be held in Stockholm.

SPORT

THE MAN WHO STOPPED AMERICA P24 • DONCASTER BOWS TO THE LITTLE MAN P25

Fans united in their outrage

By PAUL VALLEY

IT RAINED, inevitably, in Manchester yesterday, but the steady onslaught of fine, penetrating drizzle did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the lines of Manchester United fans, who congregated from mid-afternoon by the players' entrance in search of autographs or breezy salutations.

Nor did it do anything to quieten their indignation at the acquisition of the club by the Murdoch entertainment empire. The fan whom *The Times* yesterday contrived to find who was in favour of BSkyB's takeover was nowhere to be seen. The outcry was universal.

"Murdoch Unwanted Fat Cat", said the T-shirt sported by one fan, the initials of its protest etched in parody of the MUFC logo. "He's not interested in football - just money," proclaimed its owner. "And he hasn't got where he is by throwing it around," he added, scornful at the suggestion that the cash might enable the club to sign the calibre of players who will not leave the Italian league for wages below £45,000 a week - double the United ceiling under its pre-Murdoch regime.

His views were echoed by everyone I spoke to in the line. It was not unrepresentative. A phone-in vote in the local paper showed that 96 per cent of readers thought the deal should not be allowed to go ahead.

Not that they expect their views to cut much ice with the Office of Fair Trading or the Monopolies Commission - or the Murdoch newspapers which seek to influence them.

The furor that greeted news of the bid, the opinion column on the business pages of Mr Murdoch's *Times* smeared yesterday, "seemed to indicate that what was at stake was the future of a local institution, kind to children and animals."

But there was more to the fans' upset than affronted local pride. Manchester United has not, of course, been a local institution for years. The train from London to Manchester had been full of Charlton fans, boisterous and boozy, determined to drink the buffet dry (which they managed before Stoke). Yet despite their high profile the Athletic supporters were outnumbered by United fans, many of whom were born and bred in London but who travel up for every home game. It is estimated that 18 per cent of all English football fans are supporters of Manchester United. The local paper yesterday claimed that the club has 100 million followers



The Manchester United chief executive, Martin Edwards (left), holds out a welcoming hand to Mark Booth, the chief executive of BSkyB, beside the stadium at Old Trafford yesterday. Reuters

around the world. The idea is not fanciful. The official supporters' club has 200 branches in 24 countries. There are 17,000 unofficial United web sites. Even characters in the Australian teen soap *Heartbreak High* are regularly seen wearing United shirts. (Perhaps Rupert owns that, too).

At Old Trafford the owner of the "Fat Cat" T-shirt was from Wiltshire. Others in the line were from Essex, Somerset and the Irish Republic. And yet there is a resistance among the fans against further transformation. Manchester United may have

begun as a club formed by a railway company for its workers. It may have progressed early this century to become a bastion of working-class Manchester culture. It may have become a greater institution after the Munich air disaster, and the years of Busby, Best, Charlton and Law led to the club being taken to the hearts of the nation's housewives. It may have become the first English side to win the European Cup and then, under Alex Ferguson, have dominated English football in the 1990s.

But the resistance to going glob-

al is stubborn. Murdoch, the fans say, is not just after securing a vote at the table when it comes to setting up the European super league. They talked sinisterly of Sam kick-offs to suit 50m far-east pay-per-view customers and of franchising United spin-off teams in Japan and elsewhere. "It could go either way," said one fan from Somerset. "He might buy in the big names or he might do what he did in baseball and sell the big names we have, sack the manager and move the ground, as he has done with his clubs in the States."

The personal vehemence against Murdoch took me by surprise (I had hitherto presumed it was confined to journalists). But there was at Old Trafford yesterday not simply the feeling that, as one fan from Essex put it: "I don't think one man should be allowed to control so much - newspapers, TV, films and now a football club." There was also a fairly sophisticated acquaintance with Murdoch's track record of how-towing to the Chinese and Malaysians. Mention was made of Chris Patten's memoirs and the sacking of Andrew Neil.

Notwithstanding the traditional rivalry with Liverpool, there were recollections of Hillsborough. "Murdoch's *Sun* lied then about fans urinating on the dead," one Mancunian fan said. "Now he's come to do the same to the living," his mate added. And then, at the end, there was a view of a different tone. "Personally I'd rather it stayed independent," said a besuited fan who turned out to be a management consultant, "but from a business point of view it makes sense, though there is the risk Murdoch will asset-strip it."

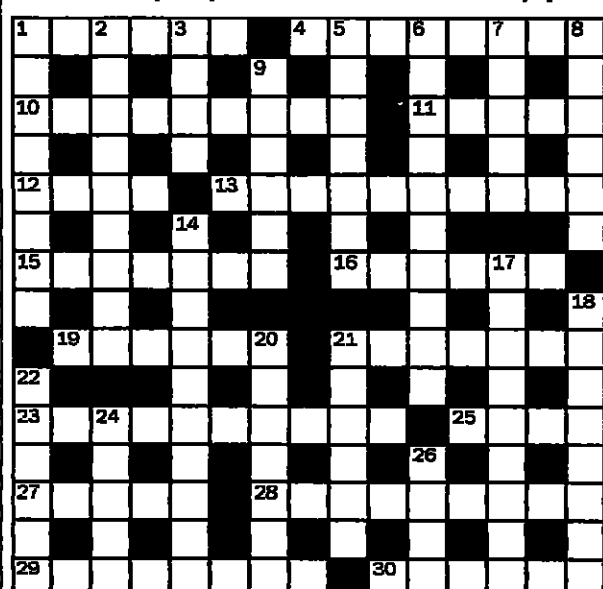
"We live in a globalising economy," said another suit, noting that the Murdoch acquisition had been reported in his morning newspaper alongside the news that Marks and Spencer is to buy more non-British goods and that Sunderland workers were in fear of a profits slump by the Japanese motor giant, Nissan. "When Manchester United became a plc it ceased to be a football club and became just another business. Once that had happened, what has happened this week became inevitable."

THE THURSDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3712, Thursday 10 September

By Sparius

Wednesday's solution



THEORY CLOTHES
LAND OF MY FATHERS
LIFE OF THE
OMST
W
GROUS MALKIE
E H
AMOURS VOYAGE
S I Y V R F P
CONSTRAN ADIEU
O G E I V N S
TOWER OF STRENGTH
E A S V R E E
NIVADIA SVIANER

ACROSS

- 1 Unreliable clerk losing middle section in dossier (6)
- 4 Student cooked with special aromatic ingredient (8)
- 10 Bird, target of shooter fellow on Scottish island (9)
- 11 In a position that's false? (5)
- 12 Most unlikely to survive (4)
- 13 Army chaplain? (10)
- 15 Idealistic union leader has a point, maybe (7)
- 16 Result in hospital department leads to trouble (4)
- 19 Way opera will make a comeback - in huge open-air venues (6)
- 21 Insurance company starts to set standards in a part of Germany (7)
- 23 Former enclave surrounded by solid red border (4, 5)
- 25 Happy half the flowers will be cut (4)
- 27 See diamonds encrusting ring, say (5)
- 28 Off amir, one indulged with a form of flattery (9)
- 29 Bear one's swallowed by the gill, possibly (5, 3)
- 30 Book knowledge, rather incomplete (6)

DOWN

- 1 The Fox and Grapes, for instance, is absolutely wonderful (8)
- 2 Plant producing gums carried by infantry (9)
- 3 Long sentence in biography (4)
- 5 Henry's involved in a revel, swilling port (2, 5)
- 6 Suit is cool, but crumpled, showing anxiety (10)
- 7 Man incorporating two items of dialect in local usage (5)
- 8 Journalist gets drunk on finally reaching border (6)
- 9 Shut people up without giving them a hearing? (6)
- 14 Bridge player consuming cooked portions of edible antelope (10)
- 17 Rude container, one slung carelessly about (6)
- 18 Cowboy's sidekick holds the ring as teller of tale (7)
- 20 High level post (7)
- 21 Having fulfilled financial obligation youngster accepts help (4, 2)
- 22 Women in denim running up in turn (6)
- 24 Drink seen as form of support (5)
- 26 Time to go out (4)

Heskey to stay with Leicester

EMILE HESKEY is poised to end speculation about his future at Leicester City by signing a one-year extension to his contract in the next 48 hours.

The Leicester manager, Martin O'Neill, is optimistic that the England Under-21 player - a target for Aston Villa - will commit himself to the club until the summer of 2000.

O'Neill said: "Money has never been a problem. It was all about how long a young player like Emile wanted to commit himself - and, to be honest, these days I can't see youngsters signing their career away."

"But talks with Emile's agent have been going pretty well and, contrary to some suggestions, have not broken down. I'm really hopeful there will be something positive to report tomorrow or Friday."

O'Neill is also confident the American goalkeeper Kasey Keller, also in the last year of his current deal, will sign a new contract - and that the club's other big-name players will sign up. "I'm not far away from agreeing a contract with Kasey Keller's agent," O'Neill said, "and the other good news is that people like Steve Guppy, Muzzy Izet and Matt Elliott are also looking to sign extensions to their contracts. If they thought the club was going nowhere, they wouldn't be thinking along those lines, so we must be doing something right."

The Northern Ireland midfielder Neil Lennon has already signed a one-year extension through to the year 2000 with the Foxes. Aston Villa are preparing a £1.5m bid for the Swedish in-

ternational Fredrik Ljungberg, club sources said yesterday. The 21-year-old Halmstad midfielder won his sixth cap for Sweden in last Saturday's 2-1 win over England. Barcelona and Arsenal have also been tracking Ljungberg, who helped Halmstad win the Swedish championship last season.

The Aston Villa manager, John Gregory, is keen to continue his spending spree following the sale of the striker Dwight Yorke to Manchester United last month. Gregory has already spent £5.75m this week on the England striker Paul Merson from Middlesbrough. He was not signed in time to make his debut in Wednesday night's Premiership match against Newcastle at Villa Park but is almost certain to start in Saturday's home game with Wimbledon.

Rangers are poised to break their own Scottish transfer record for the third time this season with a £2m move for the Brazilian striker, Christian Correia Dionisio.

The Ibrox chairman, David Murray, yesterday confirmed that the coach, Dick Advocaat, will hold further talks with the 22-year-old, who currently plays for Internacional Porto Alegre in his homeland. Dionisio has recently broken into the Brazilian national side, in which he is seen as a long-term partner for Ronaldo.

"I am obviously disappointed this information has come out at this time," Murray told the *Record* newspaper. "However, Dick Advocaat will meet

the player one more time for talks. I will also meet with Christian and his representatives to tie up loose ends. If all goes according to plan, the deal will be done."

Dionisio's arrival at Ibrox, which could take up to two months to finalise, would take Advocaat's spending since succeeding Walter Smith to £33m.

Bolton Wanderers' new Jamaican defender, Ricardo Gardner, has been labelled "the new Leonardo" by his former international coach, Rene Simoes.

Gardner, who joined Bolton for £1m after playing in the World Cup, made his league debut this week as a late substitute and scored the winner in Bolton's 3-2 victory at West Bromwich.

The Caribbean 19-year-old has been nursed into the English game by his manager Colin Todd, and made an instant impact when he was finally given his league bow at The Hawthorns.

Simoes enthused: "Ricardo has everything to go all the way in football. He reminds me of the Brazil star, Leonardo."

"Ricardo is so versatile he can play wing-back or midfielder. He is a wonderful player and is, for me, the new Leonardo."

Simoes gave Gardner his international debut as a 17-year-old after spotting him playing for Harbour View, the club Bolton signed him from. Gardner interested Paris St Germain, but that interest faded after Gardner found the pressures of France 98 affected his form in the tournament.

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Eight night Oriana cruise on 22 December from Gran Canaria to Tenerife via Dakar, St Vincent and Lanzarote • Concorde to Heathrow £2,499

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THURSDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



Back to school

Kip Kinkel is a product of the American Dream gone horribly wrong. He had everything that a comfortable middle-class life could promise: a 15-year-old boy; fine, loving parents; a beautiful home in the highly liveable environment of central Oregon; and a good school where he was deemed to be a high academic achiever.

None of which explains why, on the eve of the Memorial Day weekend last May, he shot his parents dead at home and then blasted his way through his school cafeteria, killing two fellow students and injuring 27 others. More than three months after the tragedy, the Thurston Senior High School in Springfield is still coming to terms with the reasons behind the shootings and wrestling with the anxious question of how to stop anything remotely similar from happening again. Despite some impressively dedicated efforts over the summer by teachers, parents and community workers to heal the physical and psychological wounds, there haven't been too many helpful answers so far.

"This didn't just come out of the blue, it came from somewhere well to the west of there," insists Fred Willis, president of the Springfield Education Association, and a former maths teacher at Thurston. "There was no way to pick this kid out. You could have had the best security in the world and four high walls around the building, and it would still have happened."

A record five schools in America—in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Mississippi and Arkansas, as well as Oregon—suffered shooting incidents in the last academic year. Not all the communities involved were particularly salubrious, nor did the authorities always follow prudent guidelines on security and discipline, or emergency issues such as handling the media. In Springfield, however, everything appears to have been played by the book and the authorities have received only praise for their conduct. "I don't think we'll ever know why this happened," says the school's principal, Larry Bentz. "The incident has generated much sorrow and a great deal of anger, which we're all trying to work through. Perhaps the lesson is the innate lack of control we all have. It's a

A new term has begun quietly at Thurston Senior High. But last May a pupil ran amok, killing and wounding dozens. Can there ever be a normal school day again?

BY ANDREW GUMBLE

very hard lesson we spend most of our lives trying to avoid."

On 20 May, the day before the shooting, Thurston received a tip-off from a parent that a gun had disappeared from his house and might have been stolen by a student. Within 20 minutes of the phone call the gun was found in Kip Kinkel's possession and the full story extracted: that he had bought the weapon on campus from another student, Corey Ewert, who in turn had fished it from a friend's house. Both boys were promptly escorted off the premises in police handcuffs, and suspended from school pending expulsion.

Because of his excellent family background, the police could see no reason to detain Kinkel. He displayed no signs of the seething anger that must have been building up inside him, and they sent him home. (He shot his mother in the chest after helping her in with the shopping, then shot his father in the back of the head while he was on the telephone to the National Guard to enquire about places at their nearest juvenile boot camp.) The next morning Kip was picked up by the school security cameras as he accompanied his classmates in from the sports field. But since the news of his suspension was confidential, in accordance with state education rules, nobody manning the video monitors was in a position to know that he shouldn't have been there.

Once the shooting was over, the damage was contained as much as possible. A group of students overpowered Kinkel while he tried to change his ammunition clip, the emergency services were

alerted immediately, and the injured children were treated so fast that all, apart from the two who were killed outright, are expected to make a full recovery.

Counselling sessions were immediately organised, involving teachers, parents and psychologists, and contact between members of the school community was maintained over the long summer break. There was even a dance in July, attended by 300 of the school's 1,500 students. By the time the new school year began last week, everyone was ready and classes resumed in an uncannily normal atmosphere. There was no need to get students used to using the cafeteria again, since a number of special meetings had already been held there for that purpose. A policeman came on to the staff to bolster security, but this was a measure that had been prepared before the shooting, to put Thurston in line with Springfield High School just a few miles down the road.

The only special event was a small prayer meeting held by a young Christian group on the front lawn. Blue ribbons were also strewn on hedges and on fenceposts as a sign of solidarity with the affected families. The only other thing that was different was the presence of the national media outside the front gate. Larry Bentz hired two private security guards to keep them away from the school fence and broadly succeeded in his aim of restraining over-intrusive reporters.

"While the community watched, waited and worried about us, we carried on a normal school day," says Theya Harvey, a 16-

year-old student. "Television news crews sat outside waiting for a glimpse of a distraught student, while we sat in class taking notes. They went to great lengths to find a story. We went to lunch."

So was Kip Kinkel just a freak case that everyone can now safely put behind them? Larry Bentz prides himself on the fact that there has been no call among parents for higher security or changes in school procedures. Indeed, he believes that the decision to install metal detectors, by some schools in Portland, Oregon's largest city, and elsewhere, is both excessive and wrong.

"We don't want to turn our schools into prisons," he says. "In fact, the statistics show that over the past few years violence in American schools has gone down. Fewer gang activities, fewer drugs. Schools are remarkably safe. I believe the issue is not violence in schools, but violence in society. The people we catch at school with drugs or weapons are the dumb ones. The ones we need to worry about are the ones who carry on these activities outside the school premises."

Behind such essentially reassuring messages lies a more murky reality, however. The school may not have been directly responsible for Kip Kinkel's killing spree, but the community and his family certainly were. Scratch Springfield's surface a little, and what you find is a city that either refused or was unable to heed clear warning signs and allowed itself to be taken by surprise by a not altogether surprising set of circumstances.

The conviction that Kip was a good, if troubled, kid from a good all-American family blinded everyone—including his own parents—to his overt destructive tendencies and the sheer lunacy of giving him access to powerful semi-automatic assault weapons. A difficult, brooding child from an early age, he successfully talked his father into buying him a succession of rifles and pistols—common household toys in hunting-crazy Springfield, even though most are far more lethal than the minimum required to shoot up a few ducks. His father's rationale, according to friends, was that satisfying his request might help the two of them bond better and lift Kip out of his morbid depression.

In January 1997 Kip was arrested for kicking a large rock off

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Headteacher recruitment crisis

Thousands of schools are being run by temporary heads because of the worst ever headteacher recruitment crisis. Page 6

Popular boom for retail therapy

Compulsive shopping, where people find they cannot control their buying habits, has more than doubled in the past 20 years and is affecting more men and children than ever before. Page 8

Tough new rules for wildlife sites

Tough new powers to prosecute landowners who damage Britain's most valuable wildlife sites have been proposed by the Government. Page 10

FOREIGN NEWS

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Britain delays Kosovo flight ban

Britain broke ranks with the EU yesterday over plans to punish Serbia for its brutal treatment of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Page 12

Trapped whales mock free Keiko

While millions of dollars are being lavished in an ambitious project to return Keiko to his native Iceland, conservationists are fighting to stop the capture of more killer whales for display in marine parks and aquaria around the world. Page 13

BUSINESS NEWS

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FTSE tumbles as Wall Street falls

World stock markets sustained heavy losses as they followed Wall Street downwards as fears over the future of President Bill Clinton unnerved investors. Page 16

Centrica targets 4m customers

Centrica, the gas giant, aims to capture 4 million electricity customers and pay shareholders their first dividend since the demerger from BG. Page 19

SPORTS NEWS

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Wales calls off hockey match

Wales called off a hockey game against Canada at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur when eight players fell ill with suspected food poisoning. Page 23

RFU suspends picking referees

The Rugby Football Union has suspended the appointment of referees for this weekend's matches involving Bedford and West Hartlepool. Page 28

FRIDAY REVIEW

28-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

Anatole Lieven

'Russia's rulers under Yeltsin have undermined its health to the point where it was bound to succumb to any serious new global financial infection.' Page 4

Mary Dejevsky

'So long as Mr Clinton's public opinion poll ratings hold up, so long as he is credited with the strength of the US economy and positive national feelings, Congress will be reluctant to move against him.' Page 5

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NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT
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Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the total for UK newspapers in the first half of 1998

New nemesis for President

FOUR MEN WITH DESTINY IN THEIR HANDS

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

CONGRESS IS likely to agree today to release the contents of the Starr report on President Clinton. Congressman Henry Hyde said yesterday, with key sections posted on the Internet.

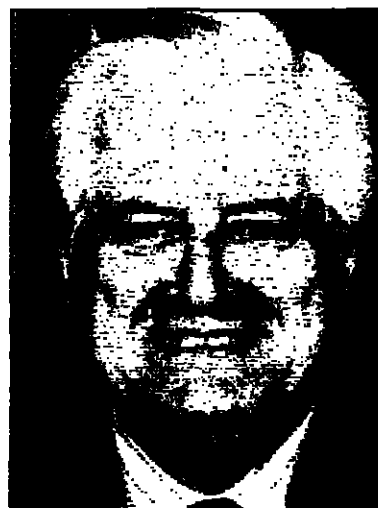
For the past eight months, the President's nemesis has been Kenneth Starr, the Republican lawyer who single-mindedly pursued Bill Clinton and his libido through the corridors of the White House.

From today, the politicians take over from the lawyers. Mr Hyde, a Republican, chairs the Judiciary Committee that will lead impeachment hearings should they occur.

Mr Hyde himself will set the tone and speed of the proceedings that will decide the fate of the president. He will also have to maintain discipline within a committee that is difficult to control at the best of times; and these are not the best of times on Capitol Hill.

Hyde had already said that impeachment solely on the grounds of the President's sexual misadventures would not be desirable, and added on Thursday that any proceedings would be carried out in a non-partisan way. "I will not condone, nor participate in, a political witch hunt," he said, promising "a fair, full and independent review of the evidence on our own."

Mr Hyde is a Congressman of long standing, and in the traditional style. The silver-haired 74-year-old smokes cigars, and during the Second World War skipped a landing craft in the



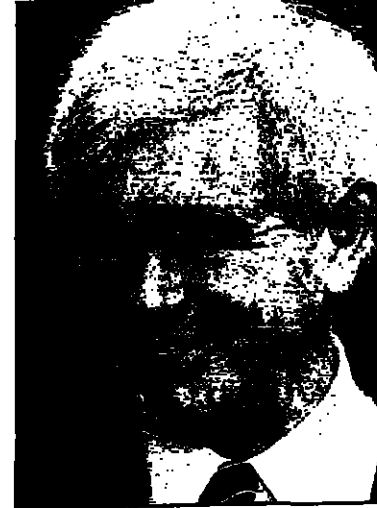
HENRY HYDE
74-year-old chairman of the Judiciary Committee which will lead impeachment hearings



BARNEY FRANK
Left-wing member of the Judiciary Committee. He is unlikely to attack Clinton



BOB BARR
An attack-dog of the conservative right from Georgia who has been calling for impeachment



NEWT GINGRICH
Speaker of the House, and the prime mover in getting the report made public

Pacific. He was born and bred in Chicago, a Catholic and a Democrat, but felt the party shifting away from him in the Sixties.

He represents a well-off north-western suburb of Chicago, near O'Hare airport. This is where First Lady Hillary Clinton grew up, an area of solid Republicanism and middle-class values. It is an area that voted for President Bush in 1992, even as the rest of the country - and especially Chicago, a Democratic bastion - swung behind Mrs Clinton's husband.

The Almanac of American

Politics describes him as "one of the most respected and intellectually honest members of the House," a Representative since 1974. He is on the right of the party, one of its most conservative members who is adamantly opposed to abortion, backs a constitutional ban on flag-burning and takes a strong stand on moral issues.

The fight to maintain discipline has already been launched by both Mr Hyde and Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House. Mr Gingrich has remained largely silent for the past few weeks, despite his record as a free-talking, some-

times wild figure on the Republican right. Party, this is because he wants to maintain the image of bipartisanship that is essential to making the proceedings work.

But Mr Gingrich himself has some dirty laundry in the cupboard. Divorce proceedings were served against his wife while she lay in hospital dying of cancer.

It will not be an easy task to maintain decorum. The Judiciary Committee contains some of the most partisan members of both parties.

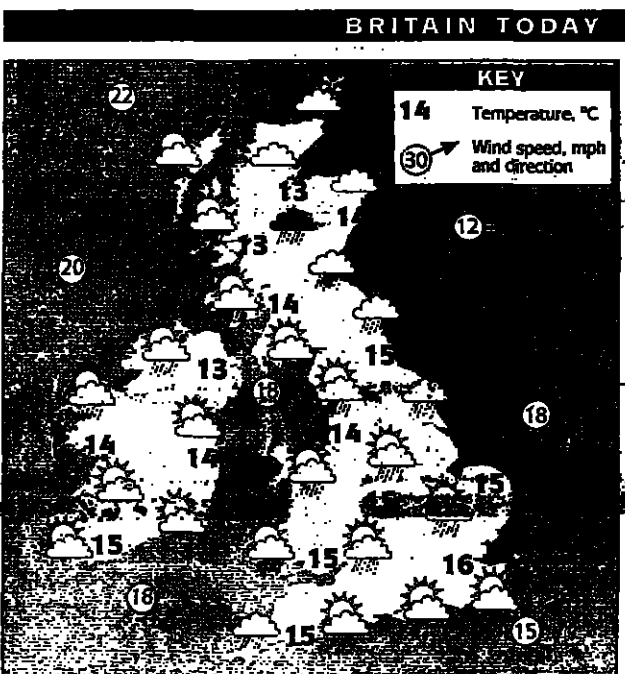
At one end of the spectrum is Barney Frank from Massa-

chusetts, on the left wing of the Democrats. Mr Frank - the only openly gay Congressman - has been faced with sexual scandals himself. At the other pole is Bob Barr of Georgia, an attack-dog of the conservative right who has been calling for the impeachment of the President since last year.

For the moment, it is these figures - Congressmen with little presence outside the US - who will be crucial. Final judgment on the President, if he is impeached, would be delivered by the Senate, allowing many of those who have already criticised the President, such as De-

mocratic Senators Pat Moynihan and Joseph Lieberman, to have their say. It would be presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William Rehnquist.

Mr Hyde is grumpy aware of the dimensions of what he now faces. Some Congressmen criticised the style of the delivery of the Starr report to Capitol Hill on Thursday, not Mr Hyde. "I have no criticism of Judge Starr," he said. "He belongs to the pantheon of saints. He's gone through hell." It is an experience which Mr Hyde will now, in many ways, repeat.



FORECAST

General situation: A noticeably cooler day than recently. Eastern Scotland and north-east England will be cloudy with rain at times. Western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be brighter but there will be a scattering of showers. England and Wales will also be brighter with the best of any sunny spells across the south-east.

London, Cent S & SE England, E Anglia: Cooler than recent days with showers and a few sunny spells. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 15-18C (59-64F).

Channel Is, SW England, Wales: Rather cloudy with scattered showers and only a few limited sunny spells. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 15-17C (59-63F).

E England, Midlands, NW England, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Rather showery, but becoming brighter this afternoon with fewer showers. A moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 14-16C (57-61F).

Cent W & NE England: A mostly cloudy day with some rain, the heaviest rain over the north ground. A moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 14-16C (57-61F).

N Ireland: Some bright spells, but cool with a few showers. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 13-14C (55-57F).

SW & W Scotland, Glasgow: W latest Cool with sunny spells and blustery showers. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 12-15C (54-59F).

SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Isles: Mainly cloudy with rain. Brightening up late in the day. A moderate west to north-westerly wind. Max temp 12-14C (54-58F).

OUTLOOK

It will be even cooler everywhere tomorrow. England, Wales and Scotland will have scattered showers and brief sunny spells. Northern Ireland will have a lot of cloud and some outbreaks of rain. Sunday and Monday will be cool and windy, the best of any sunshine in the south.

TRAVEL

Roads: West Midlands: M5 between J5 (Stam) and J2 (Dudley). Resurfacing work with narrow lanes both ways. Unit 12th October.

West Yorkshire: M1 between J43 (Stanton) and J42 (Lofthouse Interchange) (M62). Roadworks with 50mph speed limit. Unit 1st November.

Buckinghamshire: M40 between junctions 1a (A25) & 2 (Wycombe). Three narrow lanes both ways and a 50 mph speed limit in force. Unit 1st January 1999.

Berkshire: M4 between J9b (Maidenhead) and J7 (Slough). New road layout with a 50mph speed limit in a new half-mile carriageway during flood relief work. Unit 12th October.

Bristol: M5 J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Unit 1st January 2001. Suffolk A14. Various restrictions in place. Unit 1st December 1999.

AA Roadwatchers: Call 0356 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc VAT).

LIGHTING

Belfast	7.51pm	to 6.50am
Birmingham	7.33pm	to 6.36am
Bristol	7.35pm	to 6.40am
Cardiff	7.46pm	to 6.42am
London	7.25pm	to 6.30am
Manchester	7.35pm	to 6.37am
Newcastle	7.35pm	to 6.35am

HIGH TIMES

	AM	HT	PM	HT
Southampton	11.21	13.08	11.46	12.7
Cardiff	9.39	4.48	10.08	4.5
Cardiff	9.56	5.7	10.49	5.8
Dover	2.57	6.6	3.17	6.7
New Langlands	3.22	4.4	3.57	4.1
Cardiff	3.56	5.5	4.08	5.6
Cardiff	4.34	4.9	4.59	5.3
Cardiff	3.54	4.1	4.06	4.1
Cardiff	3.11	5.8	3.27	5.9
Cardiff	3.13	5.0	3.49	5.1
Cardiff	3.02	5.3	3.23	5.4
Cardiff	3.03	5.7	3.1	5.8
Cardiff	10.24	6.8	10.49	6.7
Cardiff	9.18	6.8	9.45	6.7
Cardiff	11.04	2.0	11.20	1.9
Cardiff	12.18	4.8	12.45	4.8
Cardiff	8.06	8.0	8.41	8.5
Cardiff	3.12	5.6	3.45	5.3

Height measured in metres

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

Winnipeg: Marlene, Norfolk 21°C (70°F)
 Coldest (day): Fair Isle 12°C (54°F)
 Warmest: Lake Wymny 0.83 hrs
 Frostiest: St Ives, Cornwall 9.2 hrs

For 24hrs to 26th Thursday

	Sun	Rain	Max	Min
			°C	
Abberdeen	5.7	0.04	19	66
Anglo	1.7	0.06	17	65
Anglo	2.0	0.02	19	66
Belfast	3.5	0.03	18	64
Birmingham	3.7	0.25	19	66
Birmingham	3.5	0.02	18	68
Bristol	5.6	0.08	20	67
Bristol	3.0	0.47	17	65
Cardiff	4.0	0.02	19	66
Cardiff	5.7	0.21	19	66
Cardiff	4.9	0.07	19	68
Cardiff	3.2	0.02	19	68
Cardiff	5.9	0.17	20	68
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THE INDEPENDENT

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Murdoch must not be allowed to gain a media stranglehold

RUPERT MURDOCH'S bid for Manchester United has stirred up a good deal of ugly emotion. The issue needs a calmer look. Sky has put tens of millions of pounds into football, far more than the previous gentlemen's agreements in terrestrial TV yielded for the sport. More football is broadcast than ever before, partly owing to competition from the satellite broadcaster. Football is booming in Britain.

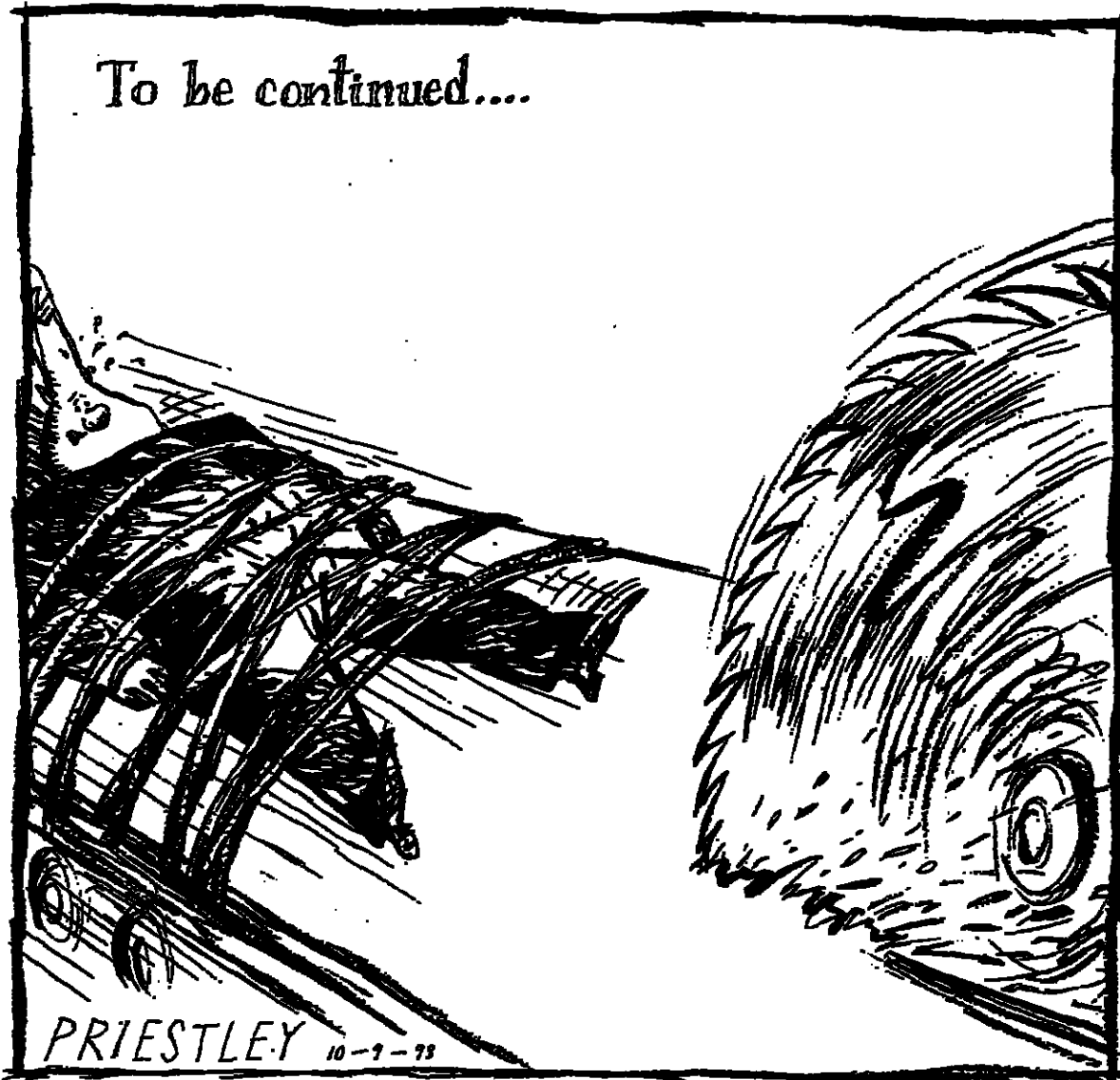
Yet there are real, rational questions to be asked about the wisdom of allowing Murdoch to buy the clubs themselves - especially as he is attempting to buy the brand leader. True, money is no guarantee of footballing success; it has done Alan Sugar little good at Tottenham. But anyone wooed by Murdoch's promises should recall the promises of editorial independence that he broke when he bought *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*.

Those who think that he will allow United to go their own way should also look at the coverage of his bid in *The Sun*, which splashed the headline "Gold Trafford" on its front page. The Murdoch empire is not characterised by freedom for its constituent parts: Old Trafford will be simply one part of a grander design.

This raises the core question of monopoly. If United is not free to go about its business, then it will be used to promote the interests of Murdoch's media outlets, especially the jewel in its crown, Sky television. When the television contract for the Premiership comes up for renewal in 2002, it will be open for Murdoch to influence the decision of the FA. By threatening to walk away from any deal, perhaps to a proposed European super-league, Murdoch will possess a veto. United is the largest, best supported and richest club in the League; otherwise Murdoch would not have wanted to buy it. The Premiership would mean little without it; other clubs might be forced to give in to Sky's demands.

This would represent an unhealthy amount of vertical integration in the television sports industry; Murdoch would effectively control the product from beginning to end. Competition, which Sky opened up, would be choked off; access to the most popular sport in the country would be dominated by one man. Anyone who has witnessed the chaos Sky's dictates have visited upon Rugby League, such as moving it to the summer, will shudder at the thought.

The advent of cable television, with the proliferation of channels this will bring, is a precious opportunity to increase choice for the viewer. The Monopolies and



To be continued....

Mergers Commission should consider just how much a Murdoch-owned United will narrow that choice, and reject the bid. This is not just about football; it is also about control of the media.

There is also a political aspect. For one thing, it matters more to millions of voters than all the party politics they see in Parliament; it is still an activity that binds the country together. The Government must also decide who its real friends are. Up until now, ministers have seemed to believe that Murdoch can be won round to their views, especially on Europe, by persuasion. They must be beginning to realise that this will never happen. In that situation, New Labour cannot allow a

fruitless search for one man's favour to prejudice its views on decisions of national importance. If the MMC were to recommend the rejection of the United deal, it would provide the Government with a wonderful opportunity to show that it can stand up to Murdoch.

The Government is starting to look tarnished: Blair's reputation for trustworthiness is fading, and he is increasingly seen as aloof and arrogant. If it were to obey the wishes of a media magnate who wants a stranglehold on one of the most popular viewing choices in the country, its standing would fall further. If government does not exist to fight monopolies and vested interests, and to open up choices for citizens, what is it for?

Cherish opera, but don't spoil it

OPERA IS a great art form, and attracts the same level of devotion from its fans as football. Too often it is sneered at by people, including politicians and journalists, who have no interest in seeing it performed; great opera is an uplifting aesthetic experience.

Yet the love of opera has also been the problem with the Royal Opera House. To love the form is not the same thing as to believe that it deserves millions of pounds each year from public coffers, or that it should be administered by well-intentioned fools. Love of opera blinded people to the ridiculous shortcomings of the ROH for too long, and attracted the wrong characters to administer it.

Yesterday's decision to shut the Royal Opera House completely for 12 months is a good one - it needs a clean break, a sweep-out of personnel, precedents and traditions, and then, it is to be hoped, a completely new beginning. The question is: what kind of beginning should it be? There are several shining examples of opera companies around the world which survive perfectly well without subsidies by attracting corporate sponsorship. But the main other difference between the Met in New York, for instance, and the Royal Opera House is the perception in this country that opera is an elitist pastime enjoyed only by toffs and snobs. This belief is self-fulfilling.

For the ROH to break the Catch 22, attract again the sponsorship that has bled away in recent years and more, then strike out without state help (for it is snobbish to suggest that opera is somehow uniquely needful of subsidies), a new and striking competence is crucial. But it is also important to allow the rehabilitated opera house to find its own level in the marketplace. If this means small-scale productions to begin with, so be it - good quality doesn't necessarily imply "expensive", and it may find that its audiences grow naturally (so long as the musicians are top-class) as a result of a new image and judicious advertising.

The success of Glyndebourne shows what can be done when a company embraces the nature of its product imaginatively. Let's hope that when "Son of the Royal Opera House" arrives it has a better business head than its predecessor - and is forced to use it.

Sprouts of enterprise

SO GLAXO and Barnados have cast themselves in the role of nanny, and have launched a £3m scheme to make children eat their greens. Perhaps for £3m they might also cut the lawn and wash the car?

Must we keep on slaughtering all of our political leaders?

WELL, THERE goes the Blair honeymoon. Again. In fact, so many times has Tony's post-nuptial celebration had "fists" scrawled all over it by the press, that his metaphorical relationship with the country is beginning to resemble Elizabeth Taylor's to tall men over 30. Previously, the Blair honeymoon, you may recall, has ended with the Welsh referendum, the Ecclestone affair, Prescott versus Mandelson, single-parent benefits, the misnamed "cash for access" story, the rise of the SNP and high interest rates. If I've somehow missed one, do feel free to write in and remind me.

This time, however, there is something more to base this on than just the feeling in our journalistic waters. There is a poll. And such a poll is it, that *The Guardian* - which commissioned it from ICM - headlined the results on their front page as "Blair bubble bursts". This may have led some of the paper's more casual, less thorough readers to assume that Labour had dropped dramatically in the polls, and that the voters were very fed up with the Government.

Indeed the accompanying article does invent something called "the disaffected electorate", only to reveal that the figures of those believing that the health service and education service are getting worse have in fact fallen (in the case of health, substantially), and that Labour is currently nearly 20 points ahead of the Tories - though that may not be saying much.

Nevertheless on one key area, that of Mr Blair's "specialness", the results are pretty clear-cut. A year ago people thought that he was different from

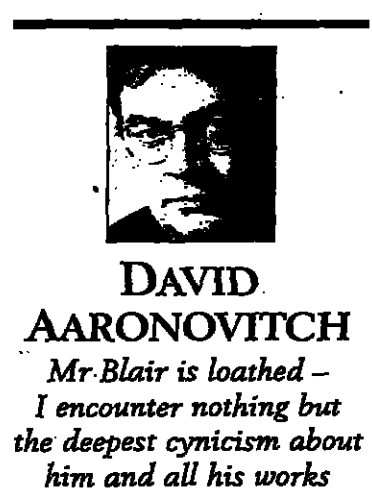
other politicians - tougher, more in touch, much more honest, and less arrogant. Now he is just a fair bit tougher, a goodly amount more understanding, and - bear with me - only 6 per cent more "more honest than other politicians". Which is to say that 34 per cent think that Mr Blair is more honest. (Incidentally, the Ashdown "bubble" has burst too, but that was always a smallish little frothy thing by comparison with Mr Blair's big, shiny, round, soapy bubble.)

I think that there are two important lessons here for Mr Blair. The first of these is that - in the eyes of the electorate - he is rapidly losing his claim to be the usher-in of a new Britain, that place where politicians are not manipulating, desperate, mendacious characters, but are you and me in limos with red boxes. Let us return to that in a minute.

The second one he already mostly knows. And that is that we are out to get him. By "we" I mean journalists. This is no exaggeration: it is nearly a year since I heard any scribbler, researcher or producer say anything even vaguely complimentary about Mr Blair. He is loathed.

For all the talk of New Labour being given an easy ride, I encounter nothing but the deepest cynicism among my colleagues for him and all his works. The fact that all his interns are male, and that their suits remain obstinately stain-free, is adduced to his awful primness, rather than his admirable moral compass.

In many ways this would have happened to any government. After all, we slaughtered the last one. If Mr



DAVID AARONOVITCH
Mr Blair is loathed - I encounter nothing but the deepest cynicism about him and all his works

Major ever did anything right, then you wouldn't have found out in the press. (This newspaper was, naturally, an honourable exception.)

For nearly 20 years we were scared witless by Mrs T, but then in came hapless John, and after Black Wednesday we practically ran the show. We saw off old Mellor (despite the fact that he was a good minister) and forced the removal of a whole succession of banking Tories. We took six Europhobic "rebels" and paraded their views relentlessly in every bulletin and edition. In the last year Blair has annoyed us by failing to fire Geoffrey Robinson when we told him to.

But the biggest problem with the way politics is discussed in this country is that we are averse to talking the adult language of choice; we prefer the baby gabble of "I want" and "gimme".

There is little encouragement, in our public discourse, of candour about the dilemmas faced by those who govern. The thing that we desire is always, somehow, cost-free. The minimum wage will lead to no unemployment, nurses must have much more money, waiting-lists should come down. And where shall we find the cash? Easy. Something must be done about BSE in lambs; nothing must be done about beef on the bone; fox-hunting must be banned; dangerous dogs shouldn't have been. And so on. Each decision is presented as hermetically sealed from consequence.

It is interesting in this light to consider *The Guardian's* claim that its poll "also shows Britain as a country which favours higher taxes to pay for better public services". It doesn't. In fact, the poll asked respondents to agree or disagree with this statement: "It is better to pay higher taxes (note the passive case here) and have better public services, than (have) lower taxes and worse public services." Remarkably, one fifth of those polled disagreed with this utterly consensual sentiment.

Such wishful thinking also affects intellectuals. Last weekend saw a conference, under the ambit of the now-defunct journal *Morism Today*, called to discuss the world and Tony's place in it. (For some reason I was not invited; the organisers have obviously never read *The Sleeping Beauty*.)

I was not surprised to be told that the gathering was long on crit and short on alternative. Blair had, they agreed, capitulated to the now discredited system of free market capitalism. And instead, he should...

At which point the screen went fuzzy. It only remains for the Bad Fairy Maleficent to remind the conference organisers that, as recently as two years ago, one of them was extolling the virtues of an end to direct taxation, and a belief in fundamentalist, American-style anti-statism. Miaoow!

In other words we don't know, we aren't always sure. Governance in the modern world is a difficult business. And isn't it a pity that, when they were in opposition, Labour failed to reflect on just how awkward it is?

I could take a million examples, but why did Labour promise to stop open-cast mining in certain constituencies, when it knew that to do so would lose jobs? The reversal of policy on this has caused understandable anger. And, when in power, why is it that no one in government has been prepared to admit that, though they do not like the idea of fox-hunting, the alienation from the law of many otherwise upstanding hunting citizens would be bad for Britain?

Would that be weakness? Or would it be a sign of strength if politicians and we of the press began to treat the electorate as though they were adults?

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"An act of cardinal folly."
David Mellor,
Football Task Force chairman,
on the decision of Manchester United shareholders
to accept the BSkyB offer for their club

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"We are inclined to believe those whom we do not know because they have never deceived us."
Samuel Johnson,
man of letters

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NO MATTER how reluctant McGwire is to be the singer in the spotlight, his thunderous swings produce the sort of prodigious home runs that have turned him into a larger-than-life figure. Every fan loves watching baseballs rocket out of stadiums, so every fan has revelled in McGwire's prowess as he has slipped into his crouch, uncoiled and crushed another pitch. Especially this season. McGwire's captivating run to history culminated on Tuesday night when he belted his 52nd

home, to eclipse Roger Maris's hallowed 57-year-old record for the most in one season. *The New York Times*

OVER THE past three seasons, in which he has hit 172 homers, the 34-year-old McGwire has established himself as the most prodigious slugger since Ruth. But he has also become, perhaps, the most open, demonstrative and sharing slugger since Ruth, as well. That kind of emotional largesse came naturally to Ruth. For McGwire, it

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
Reaction to Mark McGwire's baseball home run record



has been hard won - through a divorce, career-threatening injuries, horrible season-long slumps and several years of therapy. *The Washington Post*

WHAT MCGWIRE did was anything but easy, especially as the attention mounted to the crescendo [sic] it reached in the past two days in his home park. There were the fans. The mass

media from around the world. The family of the man whose record he would break. Despite it all, McGwire was undaunted by the occasion. He delivered in the face of it all, like the great athlete he's made himself. *The Dallas Morning News*

MCGWIRE'S FEAT has meant a great deal to St Louis, naturally. There is a great sense of pride that the great American hero of the moment plays in our city. And he loves us, his fans in

the great American outback! We are, for a moment, no longer black and white, Asian, Latino, Amerindian; no longer male or female, homosexual or heterosexual; Christian, Jew or Muslim; rich or poor, urban or suburban - we are all St Louisans, wildly celebrating our hero. He is representative of us all. And it is in such moments that a place like St Louis becomes a true community, a house of many mansions, but one spirit. *The St Louis Post-Dispatch*

Mail battle

priests

PANDORA

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S press secretary, Mike McCurry, resigned recently. He will soon be replaced by his White House assistant, Joe Lockhart, a former Sky News broadcaster. Needless to say, being spokesman for a President who is a confessed liar is going to be challenging, but Lockhart seems to have a streak of unusual candour. He told yesterday's *Washington Post*, "Most of my friends think I'm out of my mind. I can't build a compelling case that they're wrong."

NEIL HAMILTON, ex-Tory MP and victim of the cash-for-questions affair, is no longer a member of the Conservative Party, so there's no question of his attending its Bournemouth conference. However, the thought of making mischief has crossed his mind. He told one of Pandora's colleagues this week: "I may go with my bucket and spade, and sit in the middle of the beach. The delegates will need some light entertainment."

YOU MIGHT expect to see a drug-detecting sniffer dog at the arrival gate of a flight from Bogotá, but not at the top of the escalator in your local Northern Line underground station. On Tuesday evening, in London's Camden Town, homeward-bound commuters were indiscriminately sniffed and surveyed by a crowd of uniformed British Transport police. One officer told Pandora that they weren't chasing a particular criminal: "This is part of a new general initiative, cracking down on crime all over the system." The dogs are trained to smell a number of illegal drugs, including lingering traces up to 24 hours after possession. "If the dog reacts, we will search the person," promised the policeman. But, according to Chief Inspector W McCafferty, of the British Transport Police, "We go to locations based on intelligence. We don't just turn up anywhere." In other words, Camden Town, but not Golders Green. Several lawyers Pandora contacted thought there was a civil liberties issue here. "The indiscriminate use of police tracker dogs," says Adrian Clarke of Bindman & Partners, "has the effect of circumventing these important protections and, as such, amounts to a worrying breach of civil liberties." The British Transport Police are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport, so

Pandora rang John Prescott's office. They've promised to look into the matter. We'll keep you posted.

AS RUMOURS swirl about the possible curtailment of the televised party political broadcast, a new video called *Party Political Broadcasts: The Greatest Hits* is about to be released by Westminster's Politics bookstore. It runs to three hours and carries more than 40 broadcasts. Pandora suspects that one viewing ought to be enough to convince anyone that PFBs should be abolished for ever.

PANDORA'S STORY on Tuesday about Chaka Khan has outraged the World Entertainment News Network, which cut the quote from its broadcast, but not its newswire service. Yesterday, Jonathan Ashby of WENN faxed the editor of this newspaper to say the story was "a gross slur on WENN's reputation" as "a news network of some integrity". He elaborated, "During the course of the taped interview with Chaka... Chaka made the emotive comment about Bill Clinton's dick, included in *The Independent* report today, but Hannah [WENN's interviewer] was forced by Chaka's PR to rewind the tape and erase it... [He threatened] to terminate the interview there and then if Hannah didn't agree." Pandora salutes this fine example of journalistic integrity, knowing how frightening those rock music PFBs can be. After threatening to sue us, Ashby closed with a charming solicitation: "I would suggest that *The Independent* becomes a regular subscriber to our entertainment news wire service in order to obtain great stories like this." Sounds irresistible.

POOR SALMAN Rushdie. The fatwa continues to plague his life, not only forcing him to live in secret under constant guard, but now spoiling the prize-winning author's bid to become a film star. The *New York Daily News* reports that Rushdie was offered a role in a film called *Lulu on the Bridge* starring Harvey Keitel and Mira Sorvino. While the film's insurers had no qualms about Rushdie's appearing on set, several of the film crew expressed doubts about security and the unions got involved. It seems that the part may go to the actor Willem Dafoe.

An abject lesson in dumbing-down

SUSAN KARLIN

Britain is getting the American habit of blaming a little square box for all society's ills

WHILE BRITAIN fights to save that great institution, *News at Ten*, from relocating to the slum of the TV schedule, 6.30pm, here are a few words of solace on the occasion of possible defeat.

America has aired network news at 6.30pm for years - sometimes even earlier. And we have found that having an ill-informed population never hurt us. We still get out and bomb the occasional country. That's how American youngsters learn their geography. Besides, as soon as we started dumbing down our entertainment, it became our top export. There's money in stupidity.

In fact, one network here, ABC, created a whole promotional campaign based on how dumb TV is. It had slogans like, "Don't worry, you've got billions of brain cells" and "Without TV, how would you know where to put the sofa?" This

campaign was considered controversial, mainly by people whose lives were already going down the cathode ray tube. To me, it seemed rather practical. That way, if ABC's shows stank, they fitted its image. It stands to reason that smart TV creates smart people. Just ask John Major. A spearheader of an earlier *Save News at Ten* movement, he managed to rescue ITV from the

perils of going downmarket, but still raised a son who wants to marry a girl who appears at awards shows semi-naked.

Besides, early evening newscasts haven't destroyed America's sense of what's important. For very urgent, pertinent issues, news producers enjoy the dramatic flourish of breaking into regularly scheduled programmes to feature our Great Leader apologising for his extracurricular activities. Unless there's a well known athlete-turned-actor on trial for a double murder. Then they'll split the screen.

While British TV seems to be following the American model of more lucrative scheduling, it's heart-warming also to note your government adopting our politicians' habit of blaming a little square box for society's ills. Except that Americans don't worry about TV making people

dumb. They worry about TV making people violent. Or promiscuous. Our focus is more financially driven. Couch potatoes don't use tax dollars. Criminals and single teenage mothers do. So, here, the big outcry is about warning parents that their child is about to watch could turn him or her into a social pariah.

But it doesn't matter. The main thing is to drum into our heads the absolute corruptive power of the tube. This ignores the fact that there are video-recorders, and even broadsheets, for getting the news at other times, or that parental guidance and education enter into this equation. Although anyone smart knows that school is no longer the key to a livelihood. A rap album is.

And if Tony Blair thinks TV is dumbing down now, wait until there are 200 channels. If you don't believe

me, the next time you're in the States, tune in to The Food Network. There's a cooking show for dogs. Really. The airwaves of 1998 will be remembered as a virtual Mensa convention.

Sadly, this is one time when Britain's fondness for tradition will probably bow to the economic realities of running a TV business today, where ratings rule over content. Only on lucky, rare occasions can you get both. Perhaps, in time, Britain will adjust and grow to enjoy the same rapid, short attention spans that make America the great culture it is today. Besides, it's not as if you're abolishing the Page 3 girl.

But if people are truly unhappy with the direction of British TV, I may be the wrong person to advise. Whenever I've craved decent television Stateside, I've watched shows from the BBC.

Privatise the Royal Opera House, or nationalise it



GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT

It is now clear that Covent Garden has somehow, somewhere gone horribly wrong

In Berlin, they used to say at the turn of the century, the situation is serious but not hopeless, in Vienna, the situation is hopeless but not serious. The joke applies to the Royal Opera House over the past few years, except that it's tempting to say that in that period it has gone from one to the other: first serious but not hopeless, now hopeless but not serious.

The latest news that the ROH is to close "in its present form" next January and reopen - perhaps, and if things work out - at the end of the year is not only startling. It asks larger questions than seems to be realised by any of those concerned, notably Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of the ROH, and Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, about public subsidy of the arts and its justification.

Ten weeks ago, Sir Richard Eyre's report recommended a much increased subsidy, and firmly dismissed the idea of privatising Covent Garden. But actions - and inactions - speak louder than words, and the lamentable story suggests that almost any dispensation would be better than the present one.

The closure of Covent Garden for rebuilding has turned into a gruesome chapter of accidents. Last year, Sir Jeremy Isaacs retired as general director of the ROH, although there was a lengthy overlap, at the taxpayer's expense, with his successor, Genista McIntosh. But she was only in place for a few months before she left, her departure not made less mysterious by the thoroughly unconvincing explanations offered.

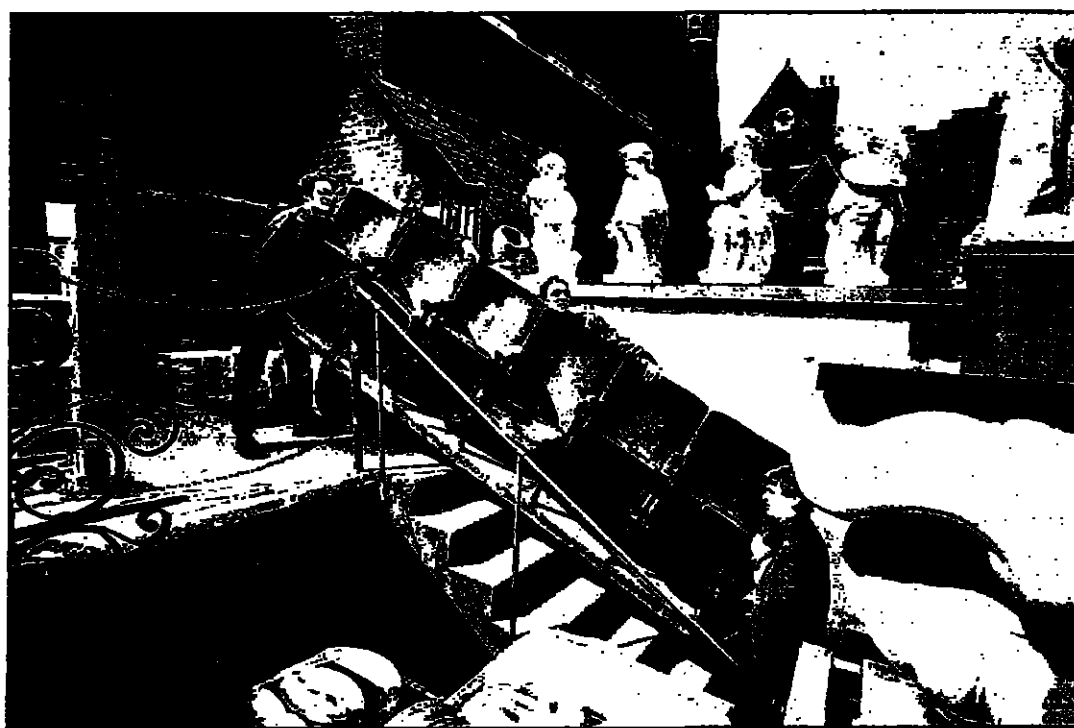
Then her successor, Mary Allen, was appointed in puzzling circumstances, arrived, and stayed only months before leaving. A staff vote of no confidence in a senior ROH executive was passed (and leaked), a union representative was suspended, and the vote was withdrawn. A new head of education was appointed but broke all recent Covent Garden records - impressive as they were - by being sacked on the day she arrived. And people complain that the plots of operas like *La forza del destino* are implausible. It was hard to imagine the

baroque plot thickening further, but it did with yesterday's announcement. Southgate said that in view of the "unmanageable deficit, no proper financial information and ineffective management structure", he and his colleagues on the board propose a complete break. Even then, the company will only reopen after new staff agreements "negotiated in line with a reduced workforce", which is management-speak for mass redundancies.

To be fair to Southgate, he did inherit intractable problems. The ROH is a wonderland of overstaffing, union obscurantism and old Spanish customs (of a kind unknown to those famous Spaniards Don Giovanni and Figaro) reminiscent of Fleet Street 20 years ago.

But the closure, drastic as it is, may be almost by the way. What is now clear beyond peradventure, as that sometime ROH director Lord Goodman might have said, is not only that Covent Garden's management has somehow, somewhere gone horribly wrong but that a larger system has failed: the relationship between ROH, Arts Council, government - and the taxpayer.

Not only the ROH but the whole "arm's length" system of arts funding has long been regarded as a source of national pride. But should it be? Why is it so obviously right that the Government should give money unconditionally to an Arts Council



Original fittings stripped from the old Opera House, along with its reputation Brian Harris

which disbursts it as it sees fit?

The Eyre report recommended, among other things, an increase of around £60m a year in subsidy, about which Mr Smith has maintained a silence. And it dismissed out of hand the idea of withdrawing all subsidy and letting the ROH take its chances in the market.

Actually, the argument for privatisation is perfectly good, not only in "right-wing" terms, and is too easily dismissed by the chattering classes and those Sir Trevor Nunn likes to call "the hives". A contradiction is too rarely pointed out. Most of those chattering at once consider themselves on the liberal left and favour heavy state subsidy of institutions like the Royal National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Royal Opera House.

And yet it is perfectly obvious that all public subsidy of "the arts" represents a net transfer of resources from poor to rich. In this respect, Thatcherite philistines who sneer at the whole idea of subsidising pools

to prance on stage are more honest than lefty hives.

I have been attending the Royal opera for more than 30 years, often enough with rapturous enjoyment, but sometimes with a troubled conscience also. Here we sit, the stalls largely occupied by merchant bankers engaged in "corporate entertainment", and almost all of the audience well above the national average income, listening to a soprano who is paid £5,000 for three hours' singing, all of which is largely paid for by the taxes of labourers in Scunthorpe or Southampton. Is this social justice?

What's more, there is a shining existential argument for privatisation 50 miles from Bow Street. The new house at Glyndebourne is not only the most beautiful theatre built in Europe since the war; it was built on time and within budget, a contrast indeed to most large public projects in recent decades. And it was built, as Glyndebourne has always been run, with no taxpayer's money. That is one logical and hon-

ourable path. The other is to follow Sir Richard's advice and increase subsidy in line with comparable opera houses in Europe - but to do so by "direct rule", forgetting about the arm's length which is really a constitutional monstrosity, as Aneurin Bevan called the nationalised corporations.

The greatest irony is that amid these managerial fiascos, the Royal Opera as an artistic enterprise (yes, it is one, however easy that sometimes is to forget) is at a pinnacle of success. Three weeks ago I was in Edinburgh where the Royal Opera gave two Verdi operas, *Luisa Miller*, in concert performance under Mark Elder, was splendid; *Don Carlos*, under the Royal Opera's heroic, loyal and baffled musical director Bernard Haitink, wasn't splendid, it was utterly magnificent.

He returns in two weeks to conduct the company in *The Ring* at the Albert Hall. I trust the directors of the ROH will be more than usually stimulated by Wagner's great parable of greed, intrigue and treachery.

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Is this the Japanese Tony Blair?

TONY BLAIR would be interested to know how often his name is invoked in Japan. Ever since he called on the Japanese to "do the full Monty", as far as reform was concerned, on a visit here at the beginning of the year, he has been cited as the role model: the politician who can remain popular enough to push through reforms that otherwise might be unacceptable to the voters.

That Japan needs reforms is hardly in doubt. The country is experiencing the worst recession since the Second World War, with forecasts of up to minus 3 per cent growth this year. Japan is not only the world's second largest economy, it also dominates the East Asian economic zone, and so recovery throughout that region depends directly on Japan.

There is a fair measure of agreement that the most urgent of the reforms is to support the banking system, but there is disagreement over the details of how this should be done.

The underlying problem is that there is no consensus about other, deeper reforms: the power of the central government *vis-à-vis* regional government, the power of the civil servants who run the various ministries *vis-à-vis* the Prime Minister and cabinet, and the changes in the tax and regulatory system in this still highly regulated society. How will the political impetus for change manifest itself?

I have just spent most of a day with the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the principal opposition party. It came second to the Liberal Democrats (LDP) in the recent elections, but doubled its vote. As a result, its leader, Naoto Kan, who tops the opinion polls as Japan's most popular politician, is being talked about as the next prime minister; or, given that they seem to change the office rather frequently, maybe the next but one. Mr Kan himself is cheerful and telegenic, at 51 a different generation from the Liberal Democrat top politicians - and openly admiring of Tony Blair. He met him earlier this year and cited him as a model a couple of times in our conversation. A delegation from the DPJ is going to the UK later this year to see what it can learn from young Blairite party workers.

Mr Kan also talked of Japan facing a change as radical as the Meiji restoration 130 years ago, and the establishing of the present democracy after the Second World War. He wants, he said, to form a cabinet on the UK model. The prime minister would choose the ministers, rather than accepting the people supported by the party and the bureaucrats. Those ministers would have full responsibility for the policies they carried out, rather than rubber-stamping policies agreed, collectively beforehand. He also wants to decentralise power (another Blair parallel) by allowing local government to have much more freedom in allocating resources.



HAMISH MCRAE
IN JAPAN

Some of the people around Mr Kan have even more radical ideas. One of the driving forces behind the party is Yoshitaka Sengoku, the chief planner, who is the Gordon Brown to Mr Kan's Tony Blair. Mr Sengoku told me that his own aim was to get the top rate of income tax down to 20 per cent. At present it is 65 per cent, and the ruling LDP has a proposal to bring it to 50 per cent. Mr Sengoku reckons that closing all the loopholes would make a cut of this sort credible. Were that to happen, the whole world would be looking to Japan to see if it could pull it off.

What does all this mean? For a start, it is interesting, and a bit of a change, to come from a country that is seen as a model for reform. One of Mr Kan's aides explained: "We see Britain as a success story, and we want to learn from its experience." But that is really more a reflection of the Thatcher reforms than anything Mr Blair has done. Privatisation of public utilities and the London stock market's Big Bang have been directly carried over to Japanese institutions, even if the volume of Big Bang has been somewhat muted in the transmission.

There seem to me, however, to be two areas where the Blair influence is directly relevant to Japan, or indeed the politics of other developed countries.

The obvious one is style. Voters clearly like politicians to appear unstuffy, approachable and slick - and ideally to have a good head of hair. It is not just a Blair model; it is also a Clinton one. He admires the US President for the way in which, up to now anyway, he has been able to build support for a broad range of apparently successful policies.

I haven't seen the DPJ adverts, but the posters are stylish and modern. Its party offices are like the new Labour headquarters in Millbank Tower, or a successful software company: white walls, busy young people scurrying about, and banks of computers. The DPJ hasn't yet got its spin-doctoring in order, for Mr Kan was worrying about the difficulty of getting his ideas accurately represented in the Japanese media, but I guess they will get round to it.

The more substantial parallel is the way in which the Blair model (or rather the Clinton/Blair model) stresses what politicians can and cannot do. Instead of saying, "We



Naoto Kan, leader of the Democratic Party of Japan, and tipped to become its next prime minister, sports the word 'success'

have a vision and this is the way it is going to be," the message is more: "We live in a global economy and all governments can do is create a broadly favourable environment in which you can then be a success within it."

In the case of Japan, this translates as: "The bureaucrats do not know best, and our job as politicians is to liberate you, the voters, from them." Deregulation is justified as freeing people from bureaucracy, not letting them be ruled by the markets. It is a practical justification for governments doing less, not an ideological one.

Just as there is a world market for goods, so there seems to be a world market for political ideas. Britain happens to have an exportable product at the moment, the thing everyone wants to buy. What the product in fact consists of is much harder to gauge. Japan has a tradition of importing ideas, modifying them and improving on them. It is an intriguing notion that Japan might be able to buy UK reforms, and then improve on them. It would, so to speak, be buying a bundle of Thatcher policies, but given a more compassionate, human face by Tony Blair.

We put it to Mr Kan that Japan really needed a Thatcher before it could have a Blair. He leapt to his feet, and ruffled around in his bookshelf for his current reading. It was, he said, a biography of Margaret Thatcher.

No, Japan is not going to get a set of reforms pushed down from above by a conviction politician. Whatever happens, even if Mr Kan does win power in the next election, there will have to be a reasonable level of general agreement before radical reform can be carried through. He would, he said, have to make the direction of reform clear, but there

would have to be discussion on it. It is almost as though he is hunting for that elusive animal, the Third Way. Can you get the benefits of efficiency that the market can bring, and still protect the weak from its harsher effects? Radical change always hurts someone. Can you get people to agree to be hurt?

Maybe in Japan you can - I don't know. But I am sure that it is very much in our self-interest in the UK that Japan should recover, in both political and economic terms. And if the Blair model can help it along the way, then we should be glad to have been helpful.

RIGHT OF REPLY

MIKE GAPES



A Labour MP responds to Ken Livingstone's case for proportional representation

KEN LIVINGSTONE'S eulogy for the German and New Zealand electoral systems and his praise of Roy Jenkins (9 September) are bizarre. I think he has allowed his hatred of the current Labour leadership to warp his sense of political reality.

Has Ken forgotten that when Europe's longest-serving leader, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the Christian Democrats first came to power in 1962, it was not because of a general election victory. The German Liberals changed sides, and put him into power without an election by betraying their Social Democrat coalition partners. Their leader, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, kept his job as Foreign Minister.

Paddy Ashdown hopes that, with the help of Jenkins (another politician with personal experience of deserting former allies), he may succeed in his ambition to become the Hans-Dietrich Genscher of British politics. Ken Livingstone's proposal would help him do that!

Ken Livingstone also praises New Zealand, but that is a poor example. Their new system led to the break-up of the Labour Party.

I hope the Jenkins Commission sees the overriding importance of keeping the link between MP and constituency. There are only two ways to do that and also ensure that each MP elected secures a majority of preferences. One system is called the "Alternative Vote", the other the "Supplementary Vote". They keep the link between MPs and constituents and ensure extremists or opportunists cannot hold the balance of power.

I agree with Ken that a party list top-up is not acceptable, but nor is his best loser list. Both would act as a Trojan horse for Paddy Ashdown and threaten Labour's unity. Is that what Ken wants?

In favour of Deep Earthers

PAUL DAVIES has been writing excellent books about science for so long that it is hard to believe that he is still getting better. But on this evidence, he is. I approached *The Fifth Miracle* with a little trepidation. It is subtitled "the search for the origin of life", and there is something of a tradition among eminent astronomers and physicists that, once they reach a certain age, their thoughts turn to semi-philosophical mysteries in the mistaken hope that such a soft subject must be easier than the physics which is now too taxing for their brains.

The results can be embarrassing. But Davies succeeds not only in being provocative and controversial, but in maintaining the rigorous scientific approach of the physicist. He also uses



THURSDAY BOOK

THE FIFTH MIRACLE
BY PAUL DAVIES. ALLEN LANE, PENGUIN PRESS, £18.99

his writing skills to bring a fascinating but largely unused idea into the limelight.

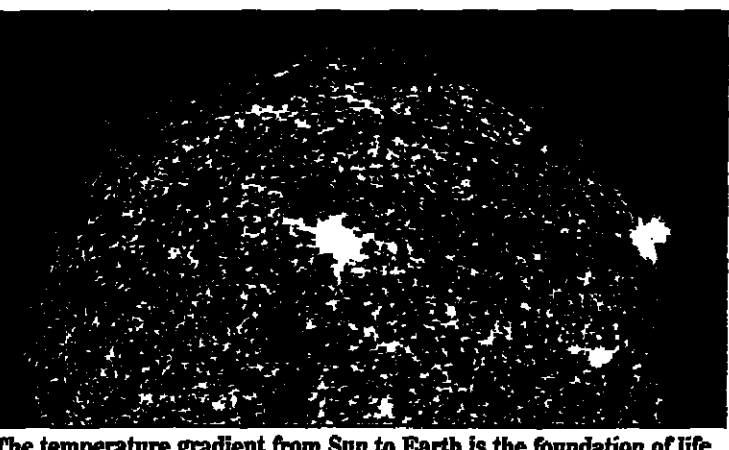
The theme of *The Fifth Miracle* is not so much how life came into being, or even what life is (although Davies offers as neat a summary of its meaning as you could hope to see), but rather where life can exist - in particular, where life can originate.

The key to life, at this level, is a flow

of energy from a hotter system to a cooler one. Life on Earth today exists because the Sun is hot and the surface of the Earth is cool. The shift of energy from the Sun to the Earth implies that the thermodynamic quantity known as entropy, which is inversely related to the existence of complexity and information, can decrease on the surface of the Earth even though it always increases in the universe at large. Interesting things can happen on the surface of the Earth because elsewhere things are getting more and more boring as the stars die. Eventually, the Sun will be a burnt-out cinder at the same temperature as its surroundings.

Using this kind of physical insight, Davies pounces on the recent discovery of bacteria that live in the depths of the ocean. They feed off the entropy flow associated with underwater volcanic vents, and off other superbugs that seem to exist deep within the "solid" Earth (actually, honeycombed with microscopic pores). Their existence is revealed by, among other things, the deep-drilling programmes of the oil explorers.

But perhaps "pounces" is the wrong word. Rather, after introducing the idea of the relationship between life and thermodynamics, Davies slides round the back of his main theme, introducing us to the genetic code and to traditional ideas about the origin of life. He prepares the ground so that his dramatic suggestion that life began "hot and deep" - far below the surface of the young Earth, where it was protected from the battering that took



The temperature gradient from Sun to Earth is the foundation of life

place at the planet's surface as debris from the formation of the solar system rained down - seems both natural and compelling.

The key step in this preparation involves a thorough discussion of the difficulties of the conventional view: that life on Earth originated in what Charles Darwin called a "warm little pond" at the surface of the planet. J B S Haldane elaborated this idea to encompass the entire primordial ocean, in a condition he memorably described as having "the consistency of hot dilute soup". Davies clearly spells out the problems with the primordial soup hypothesis, before offering his alternative.

The argument is beautifully constructed, and quite persuasive. It happens that I am not persuaded, even though I share Davies's doubts about the primordial soup. This is because I find the evidence for a cosmic origin of life, in the clouds of material between the stars, even more compelling largely because of the immense amount of time offered by this scenario for life to emerge.

The cosmic connection has been promoted by another eminent as-

tronomer, Sir Fred Hoyle, who has unfortunately tended to antagonise his critics by seeming to stray across the fine line separating respectable speculation from crackpot theorising. To his credit, Davies also discusses these ideas, explaining why he is dissatisfied with them on scientific grounds. But science usually makes rapid progress when two (or more) rival hypotheses purport to explain the same phenomenon, and we now have the delicious prospect of a rivalry between the Deep Earthers and the Cosmic Connectors which will stimulate the debate about how and where life first appeared.

I don't by any means agree with all conclusions Davies reaches in this delightful book. But I do emphatically agree with the way he sets out his stall. Right or wrong, it is a classic example of how to present a scientific case, and an insight into the way good scientists work. A theory doesn't have to be right for it to be good science, and, like the book, this is one of the best.

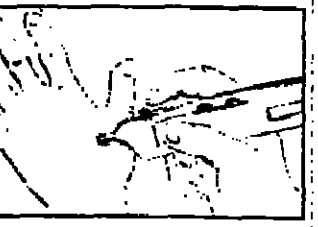
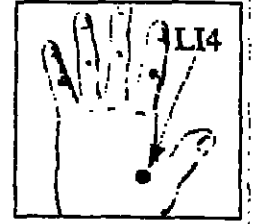
The reviewer's latest book is *Almost Everyone's Guide to Science* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

JOHN GRIBBIN

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Albert Eggler

IT WAS in 1956, when the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research in Zurich organised their second expedition to Mount Everest, that Alfred Eggler was invited to lead a party of ten of the country's top climbers.

The expedition, spread over a period of four months, was a complete success. The second and third ascents of Everest (8848m high) were made by two parties of two climbers on 23 and 24 May, as well as the first ascent of the neighbouring 8511m Lhotse – the fourth highest mountain in the world – on 18 May by a third two-man party. The arrival of the monsoon on 26 May prevented a third attempt on Everest by a summit-party in which Eggler himself had intended to participate.

Born in Brienz at the foot of the Bernese Oberland in 1913, Eggler first visited the mountains as a small boy in the footsteps of his father, a keen skier, and he took up skiing in earnest whilst at school. His mountaineering career began during his student days at Bern University, where he studied law, and in 1934 he was elected to the exclusive Akademischer Alpen Club of Bern. From then on, accompanied by friends, many of whom were experienced mountaineers, he climbed most of the classic Alpine routes: on honeymoon after his first marriage, he and his wife ascended the Z'mutt ridge of the Matterhorn, returning in time to attend a dance at Zermatt the same evening.

Eggler had a distinguished career in Switzerland's militia army (something every Swiss man has to take part in up to the age of 50), serving for a total of 2,000 days, and rising to the rank of Major. He was Commandant of army mountain training camps in summer and winter, and in 1965 he was appointed chief of the Army Avalanche Service. Many of his colleagues during those years became lifelong friends.

For many years he was attached to the Federal Tax Administration as a lawyer, later setting up his own legal practice in Bern, from which he finally retired in 1987. He was a prominent member of the Liberal party, and a member of his local city council. With his wide mountaineering interests he was elected President of the Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club from 1964

to 1987, of the Union Internationale des Associations Alpines from 1969 to 1972, and of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research from 1987 to 1993. He was an honorary member of the Swiss Alpine Club, and also of the Alpine Club London, an honour he prized highly.

It is not given to many men to live a life as active and personally fulfilling as Eggler was able to do for over a decade after his retirement from public life. Devoted to daily physical exercise, including bicycling, hiking, and golf, he managed to retain a degree of physical fitness and mental ability remarkable for his years. In his eighties he enjoyed rock climbs in the summer and ski tours in the winter from which, as his wife used to tell him, he always returned looking greatly refreshed and cheerful.

On honeymoon, he and his wife ascended the Z'mutt ridge of the Matterhorn, returning in time to attend a dance at Zermatt the same evening

It was only after he had recovered from an attack of pneumonia in 1977, when it took him 10 hours to climb the 4099m Monch from the Jungfraujoch, that he began to feel his diminished powers, having done the same climb six years earlier in two and three-quarter hours! Slowing down did not however mean an end to weekly excursions in his favourite hills.

During recent years he was a tireless planner of summer and winter expeditions into the mountains he loved, accompanied by close friends, and often by members of his family. He took his great-grandson out to ski with him in January 1998. He was an excellent skier and a very reliable leader, always acquiring in advance a thorough knowledge of the region, of the snow conditions, and of the weather.

Albert Eggler had been looking forward to visiting Ladakh in September, accompanied by his daughter and her husband. His death occurred quite suddenly, when he

slipped while walking down a steep pathway, after a short climb amid familiar hills accompanied by a close friend.

TREVOR BRAHAM

When a highly talented group of Swiss alpinists, including several professional guides ("les Genevois") returned in December 1952 from a second, gallant attempt to make the first ascent of Everest, it was understandable that some of them should entertain doubts about the competence of British "amateurs", albeit with good alpine credentials, to succeed where they had failed, writes John Hunt. The Swiss guide Raymond Lambert and the Nepali sirdar Tenzing Norgay had turned back within about 800 feet of the summit in May of that year, a sec-

ond expedition was forced to retreat in the face of fierce gales in December.

In truth, these two heroic efforts lacked logistical support as well as the backing of supporting parties. Above all, the two expeditions lacked firm leadership, planning and organisational skills which were necessary for them to operate in unison under extreme conditions of altitude, wind and weather.

This was apparent to the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research (Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpine Forschung) which had financed and launched these attempts on the mountain. The foundation decided to make a radical change in the composition and leadership of a third Swiss effort, to be launched in 1956. Albert Eggler, an advocate from Bern and a professional soldier in the Swiss Army, possessed the experience and skills, the decisiveness and authority which commanded respect among his friends and team members, chosen from German-

speaking mountaineers from the Oberland and the valleys of the upper Rhône. But he was also greatly loved by the team. A quiet and modest man, of few words and no pretensions, his leadership was by example.

I met members of all three Swiss expeditions at a gathering in Rosenluis, convened by the Swiss Foundation to celebrate their success; it was a nice gesture that they chose 1963, the tenth anniversary of our own first ascent of Everest. It was a very happy meeting which brought together, for the first time, the climbers from Geneva and the German-speaking alpinists who had climbed the mountain (as well as neighbouring Lhotse). We British were represented by the veteran from the 1924 Expedition, Noel Odell, and myself. And of course, Tenzing Norgay was there.

We climbed on the limestone pinnacle of the Engelhörner and some enduring friendships were made. Among them was that between Eggler and myself. In the following years we would meet to climb or ski together with other members of Eggler's team, at some climbing venue or other. Good memories abound from those years.

At a centenary meet of our Alpine Club at Zermatt, various Swiss and British climbers traversed the Lyskamm and followed that delightful climb with a much harder route on the Briethorn (the Klein-Trifje or "Young" ridge). Another year, with Ernst Reiss (who had climbed Lhotse), we made the fifth ascent of a notably hard rock climb which had been pioneered by Reiss: the south-west face of Wellhorn.

One winter, while skiing at Champéry, Eggler and I, with his daughter Beatrice, made the first recorded mid-winter ascent of the Haute Cime of the Dents du Midi and back to the village, in the course of a short January day. While taking part in the celebrations at Zermatt to mark the centenary of the Swiss Alpine Club, two Swiss "Everesters", Eggler and Luchsinger, with my wife and myself, decided to pay a token tribute to Edward Whymper and his companions who, in 1865, had first climbed the Matterhorn. The weather was atrocious and the mountain heavily covered by fresh snow; yet we ventured



Eggler (right) with John Hunt in the Engelhörner, 1963

for several hours up the Siss (or Hörnli) Ridge, following the footsteps of the pioneers, until we felt satisfied that honour had been done to those heroes.

We were thwarted by bad weather on another occasion, when we planned to climb the Eiger by its north east buttress (the "Lauber" route). We had to settle for humbler

fare: the attractive granite ridges above Meiringen (Gletthorn, Bergseeschijen, Schijenstock and Tellstock). Hard little climbs, but the good company was what mattered.

My final and abiding memory was skiing with Eggler at Mürren. He was accompanied by two adored Tibetan ("Aps") terriers which, after struggling up the "pistas", were

provided with a free ride downhill, their heads visible at the back of their master's rucksack!

Albert Eggler, mountaineer and lawyer: born Brienz, Switzerland 11 June 1913; twice married (one son, two daughters); died Simmenfuh Mountain, Switzerland 25 August 1998.

Ian Grant

AS THE first Secretary of the Victorian Society, and one of the first architects to champion authentic 19th-century design, Ian Grant was a pioneer in the movement to save Victorian architecture, not only in this country but also in the United States and Australia. He worked on some of the most important 19th-century interiors in Britain, including the Houses of Parliament, the Reform Club, the Royal Albert Hall, and the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square, London.

His father, James Grant, was a painter, Head of Painting at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, and Ian was educated at Westminster School and the Architectural Association, where he was trained in the modern movement philosophy then fashionable, but later concentrated on restoration work. He worked for Cluttons, and for the architect Campbell Jones, on Bucklebury House, Queen Victoria Street.

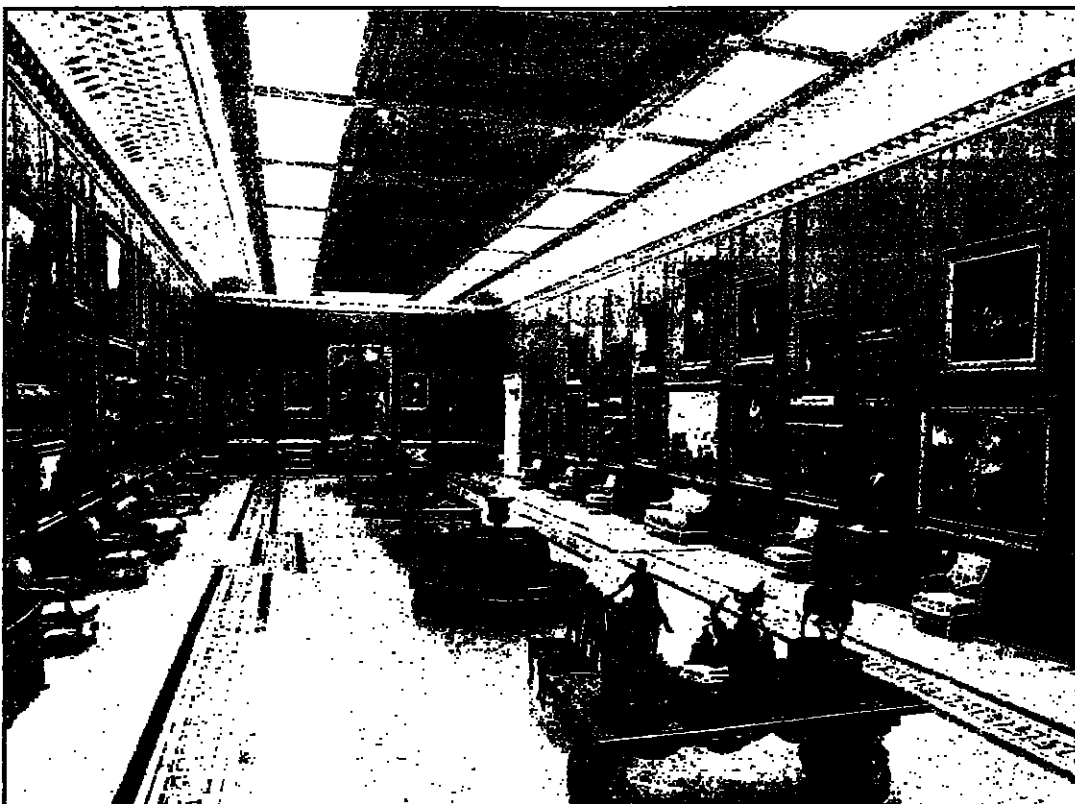
He was amongst those who gathered at Lady Rosse's house in Stafford Terrace, Kensington on 25 February 1958, to found the Victorian Society, together with such eminent figures as Hugh Casson, John Betjeman and Nikolaus Pevsner. Lord Esher was the first Chairman, and Grant became Secretary, working part-time and unpaid for two years, doing everything from editing the society's annual report to stuffing envelopes with appeals for the Euston Arch.

With growth in membership and his increasing practice, he gave way to a successor with more time, a decision possibly assisted by the fact that he and Pevsner did not always



Grant's aphoristic advice – 'Do all that is necessary, and as little as possible' – is the epitome of good preservation philosophy

agree. However, he remained on the committee organising events for the society. A contemporary remembers a visit to Leicestershire, where a society members were surrounded by great and good locals, astounded by the group of enthusiasts who had come to study a Victorian country house. Other occasions included a



The Large Gallery of the Wallace Collection, where Grant retained the 19th-century moulded ceiling coves at the same time as lowering the central section to incorporate modern lighting

"Victorian dress show" appropriately staged in his own house, and a visit to Paris. Throughout his life his guided tours were well-attended and converted many to the understanding of good Victorian architecture.

In 1971, he was chosen by Unesco to visit Australia to advise on a policy for that country's rich inheritance

of 19th-century buildings. Clive Lucas, a leading restoration architect and member of the Board of the Australian National Trust, remembers his visit as a turning point in the preservation movement. He cited Grant's aphoristic advice – "Do all that is necessary, and as little as possible" – as the epitome of good

preservation philosophy. Though Grant only visited Australia once again, he found the United States as rich in 19th-century architecture and equally welcoming.

Grant prided himself on his work being unobtrusive, always delighted when it was imperceptible. His restoration projects show his minimalist approach, respectful of the original designer and difficult to detect. After the first IRA bomb at the Palace of Westminster, he was called in to advise on the repair and redecoration of the smaller committee rooms, an initiative which led to a campaign of restoration throughout the palace under the late Robin Cooke MP.

One of his largest commissions was the installation of air-conditioning throughout the Wallace Collection from 1976 to 1982. This involved the re-installation of original features, and redecoration of many of the 20 galleries affected, a seminal project since it was the first time that a curator and consultant had taken the original decorative schemes of even a major Victorian museum into account.

He was consulted by the Royal Albert Hall, and his traditional but vibrant redecoration of the Royal Staircase and Royal Retiring Room was completed last year. Grant was never afraid of using rich patterns whether on the walls or in the carpet, happily commissioning modern copies of traditional Victorian fabrics and papers, believing that even the most insistent pattern retreated into its proper place in the decorative scheme when correctly used. He refurbished two former Rothschild residences, Halton and Ascott in Buckinghamshire.

He worked at the Reform Club, a Grade I listed building for which he always had a great affection, and also re-decorated much of its neighbour the RAC with equal success. He was never a "Goth" but nonetheless was employed by the Crown Estate to furnish and decorate all the Quinlan Terry villas in Regent's Park, including one in the Gothic style.

This was the sort of project which he enjoyed, punctilious in every detail, very much what he had done in his own house in Kensington, with the assistance of his life-long friend Paul Taylor. Together they bought Victorian art and decorative features, often from the Portobello Road in the 1950s and 1960s, using them to create a rich and attractive interior. This was always a hospitable house, and guests from all over the world, learnt to love and understand Victorian interior design as so professionally displayed, and returned home as convinced preservationists.

Grant was involved in many Kensington bodies, becoming Vice Chairman of the Kensington Society, and Chairman of the Ladbroke Association at his death. His two worlds were combined in Linley Sambourne House, the house of Lord and Lady Rosse, where the Victorian Society had been founded. When the Greater London Council bought the house in 1980, they turned to the Victorian Society to manage it, and Ian Grant was chairman of the managing committee until 1997. In this capacity he was able to ensure that the restoration of the interior was sensitive and minimal. His influence was also significant at Leighton House, where again he advised the curator, Stephen Jones, in his characteristic way, always generous with practical advice and experienced guidance.

HEERMONE HOBHOUSE

Ian Dawson Grant, architect and interior designer: born London 26 March 1925; died London 27 August 1998.

Lucio Battisti

IN THE country which invented the paparazzo, the obsessively private singer-songwriter Lucio Battisti succeeded in avoiding photographers on all but a handful of occasions since his last public appearance in 1982.

Even before he dropped from sight, his relations with the press had been tense, as was his rapport with record companies and even with other musicians such as Giulio Rapetti, known as Mogol, the man who put lyrics to some of Battisti's best-known hits ("Acqua Azzurra, Acqua Chiara", "Pensieri e Parole", "I giardini di Marzo"; the latter two of which were No 1 in the Italian

charts for more than 20 weeks). His legendary testiness failed, however, to dent the devotion of his fans, and his place of honour in the pantheon of Italian light music remained unchallenged.

From the small town of Poggio Bustone north of Rome, Battisti had a hard struggle to break into the music world. When he did, in the mid-Sixties, it was as a humble guitarist in a backing band, and for a while he remained unknown to the general public. The star of this tongue-tied boy from the provinces began to shine amongst musicians, however, when his compositions sent established bands shooting up the charts.

In 1967, Equipe 84 had a No 1 hit with his song "29 Settembre". In the same year he won his first contract as a singer, and his high, nasal tones soon flooded the airwaves. In a decision which was to change the course of Italian popular music, the Ricordi recording company threw Battisti together with the lyricist Mogol. The combination worked: the couple broke the mould, introducing the rhythms of soul and rock 'n' roll into a stagnant scene, and spearheading a new generation of singer-songwriters.

Others took Battisti's legacy further, injecting the kind of strong revolutionary-left element absent from his more lyrical works, and earning

him a reputation as being on the other, unfashionable, side of the political fence. But the simplicity of the Battisti-Mogol creations, their dwelling on the emotions and anxieties of youth, was considered by many a welcome antidote to the aggressive commitment of their contemporaries.

In 1969 his first album, *Lucio Battisti*, appeared, gathering together a series of hit singles and sealing a love affair with the public which was to continue up to and beyond his death. He went on to sing with Wilson Pickett, and to write for the leading ladies of Italian music Mina and Patty Pravo. Almost every single he

released between 1969 and 1976 went straight to the top of the charts.

Battisti's fame sat uneasily on him, and arguments with his colleagues were frequent. The Battisti-Mogol team broke away from Ricordi early in the Seventies to set up their own label, Numero Uno. But the collaboration with Mogol came to an end too, breaking down acrimoniously in 1980, since when he has worked with his wife, Grazia Letizia Veronesi, who is blamed by many for his estrangement from the world of commercial music.

With Veronesi, Battisti produced more experimental works – a new recording was almost ready for release at the time of his death – but

these failed to excite the same enthusiasm as his earlier ones. He remained, however, one of Italy's highest-ever musical earners, surpassed only by Domenico Modugno of Volare fame. Used incessantly in film scores, on television, in commercials and reproduced in cover versions, his creations continued to produce royalties in excess of one billion lire (£350,000) each year.

ANNE HANLEY

Lucio Battisti, singer, songwriter, record producer: born Poggio Bustone, Italy 5 March 1943; married Grazia Letizia Veronesi (one son); died Milan 9 September 1998.



Battisti: high, nasal tones

10/10/98

Lamar Crowson

TALK TO any musician who performed with the pianist Lamar Crowson or was his student, and within the first sentence at least one (and, more often than not, all) of the following adjectives will be uttered: "inspirational", "magical", "peerless".

In 1981 Alfred Brendel described Crowson as "one of the finest chamber music pianists of our day". Brendel was reviewing *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and his comments referred to the lamentable (accidental) omission of an entry on Crowson - an oversight now rectified for the forthcoming edition. Reflecting on one of the first times he heard Crowson - in partnership with Jacqueline du Pré - Brendel wonders why a virtuoso soloist of his calibre should prefer to concentrate on chamber music. Crowson's own words provide an answer: he occasionally confessed to finding solo work "bare and lonely".

Nevertheless, as a soloist he brought exceptional eloquence to his playing, especially of sonatas by Haydn, Mozart and Clementi, while summoning an equal degree of panache to such Romantic works as Rachmaninov's Fourth Piano Concerto and an astonishingly wide range of contemporary music. Peter Racine Fricker's *Three Studies*, of which Crowson gave the first performance in Cheltenham in 1961, are dedicated to him.

It was probably his capacity to bring out the best in others that made him a consummate chamber musician. As Emanuel Hurwitz, leader of the Melos Ensemble, put it: "When you walk on to a platform with someone of his artistic integrity, you feel nothing but total confidence. Among his recordings with the Melos, the Mozart and Beethoven Quintets for Piano and Wind, Hummel's Quintet and Septet, Schubert's "Trout" Quintet (why has that not yet been reissued as a CD?) and Janacek's Concertino (which earned the Edison Award), particularly demonstrate the vibrancy of his pianism. His flawless rhythmic drive, always intense and compelling, is equally apparent in his recording of the Faure Piano Quartet (with the Pro Arte).

The list of artists with whom he appeared is a paean of praise in itself: the Amadeus Quartet, Janet Baker, Dennis Brain, Norbert Brainin, Pierre Fournier, Ralph Kirshbaum, Manoug Parikian, Itzhak Perlman, Ruggiero Ricci and Uto Ughi, to mention only a few. More recently, indeed just a matter of months ago, Crowson accompanied Tamsin Little on her visit to South Africa.

Born in 1926, Crowson received his early education in Portland, Oregon, where he went on to study history, literature and art at Reed College in 1943-44 and 1946-48; the intervening period was spent in the US Navy.

In 1948, at the invitation of Arthur Benjamin, he left the United States to become Benjamin's piano pupil at the Royal College of Music in London (as Benjamin Britten had been in the 1930s; it was from Britten that Crowson said



Crowson (left) with the cellist Alexander Kok, Cape Town, 1968

Photo-Hausmann

he learned the quiet art of page-turning. During the 1950s he was awarded many prestigious prizes, notably the Chappell Gold Medal, the Dannreuther Prize and the Harriet Cohen International Medal. In 1952 he was among the finalists in the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. He went on to perform concertos with such illustrious conductors as Barbiroli, Barenboim, Boulez, Boult, Davis, Monteux and Sawallisch.

Having been appointed to the staff of the Royal College of Music in 1957, Crowson made his first visit to Cape Town as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in 1963. After three years as a lecturer at the South African College of Music (University of Cape Town, 1965-68), he returned to the RCM (1969-71), but his connection with South Africa was the one that was to endure.

His decision to settle there in 1972 was met with general bewilderment; there can be no doubt, however, that he enhanced the musical life of the coun-

try beyond measure, while also retaining his international links. At UCT he was made a professor in 1980 and received an honorary doctorate in 1996.

The warmth of his personality, his nervous energy, intellectual rigour, generosity of spirit, creative imagination, sense of humour, quick wit, immense wisdom and kindness all contributed to Crowson's exceptional gifts as a teacher. His master classes, not only at the RCM and UCT but also at the Britten-Pears Academy, Dartington, the University of Queensland and elsewhere, were the perfect vehicle for him to communicate his insights and encourage in his students the ability to exchange ideas and articulate their opinions on questions of style and technique, tone production and colour.

The pianist Howard Shelley, one of his pupils, said of Crowson:

As a teacher, he was one of that rare breed who is able to adapt to each student's personality, drawing out the very best. The antithesis of the typical music professor, he was lively, modern and dynamic in appearance and approach. He was usually dressed in denims and cowboy boots, and his trademark was a distinctive pipe through which he puffed aromatic tobacco as he expounded his fascinating and individual theories on music, the piano and performing. His refined fingers produced a unique luminosity and expressiveness, even in the softest pianissimo.

Among other students of Crowson to have developed professional careers of their own are Clifford Benson, Ian Brown (of the Nash Ensemble), Gwenneth Pryor, Jan Latham-Koenig, Niel Immelman and the late Steven De Groote. Crowson was as devoted to his pupils as they were to him. As he wrote in a recent letter to Benson, "Records get deleted; critiques crumble; but good students, like children and grandchildren, perpetuate".

RUTH THACKERAY

John Lamar Crowson, pianist: born Tampa, Florida, 27 May 1926; three times married (two sons); died Johannesburg 25 August 1998.

TECHNOLOGICAL NOTES

TOM STANDAGE

The Internet is only as good as its users

IS THE Internet a force for good, or evil? On the one hand we have the Government encouraging the nation's schools to get online; on the other hand, the Internet is widely seen as a seedy underworld populated by hackers and pornographers. An educational panacea or hotbed of criminality? The lesson of history is that this is the wrong question to ask.

The truth is that ever since people have invented things, other people have found ways to put those things to criminal use. "It is a well-known fact that no other section of the population avails themselves more readily and speedily of the latest triumphs of science than the criminal class," Inspector John Bonfield, a Chicago policeman, told the *Chicago Herald* in 1888.

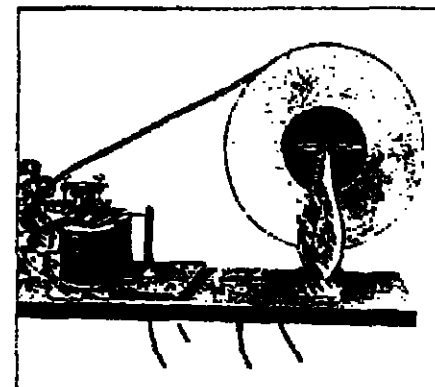
Bonfield was referring not to the Internet, but to its 19th-century ancestor: the electric telegraph, a vast messaging system that spanned the world 150 years ago, linking far-flung countries into a network of constantly updated news, business information and private messages. The telegraph was, in effect, the Victorian Internet.

Today we regard things like hackers, codebreakers and online weddings as uniquely modern phenomena associated with the Internet; but they could all be found on the telegraph network too. Spies and criminals used its wires to send coded messages; others used the network's speed to get advance knowledge of the outcomes of horse races. Illicit romances blossomed between telegraph operators as they tapped away at their Morse keys.

All of which serves to tell us something about the Internet: that the misdeeds perpetrated over its wires and fibre-optic cables should not be blamed on the technology itself, but on its users. The fact that exactly the same sorts of misdeeds were going on in the last century shows that unchanging human nature, rather than fast-moving technology, is the real culprit.

Yet the Internet also has its boosters, who believe that it will usher in a new era of international understanding. In a speech in November 1997, Nicholas Negroponte, head of the MIT Media Laboratory, declared that the Internet would break down national borders and lead to world peace. In the future, he claimed, children "are not going to know what nationalism is."

Exactly the same wild claims were



Morse: the Victorian Internet

made about the telegraph, following the completion of the first transatlantic cable in 1858. In 1894, by which time the world had been completely trussed up with telegraph cables, Sir John Pender, chairman of the company that is known today as Cable & Wireless, suggested that telegraphy had "prevented diplomatic ruptures and consequent war and been instrumental in promoting peace and happiness. The cable nipped the evil of misunderstanding leading to war in the bud." The events of the next decades, of course, proved him wrong.

Given a new invention, there will always be some people who see only its potential to improve the world, while others see new opportunities to get up to no good. The mistake that was made in the last century, and is being made again today, is that technology can change human nature; that inventions alone can make us better or worse people.

After the arrest of 200 suspected members of an Internet-based pornography ring earlier this month, one civil liberties lawyer, James X. Dempsey, summed things up perfectly. "The Internet only facilitates crime the way the automobile facilitates crime," he told the *Washington Post*. "Like any tool, it has pluses and minuses." It was true of 19th-century technology, and it is just as true today.

Tom Standage is the author of *The Victorian Internet: the remarkable story of the telegraph and the 19th-century's online pioneers* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.99)

Taste of genius on the trolley trail

THE INDEPENDENT
ARCHIVE
10 SEPTEMBER 1988

Jeremy Round
challenged Marco
Pierre White, the rising
star of the London
chefs, to invent a meal
for two for the amateur
cook for under £25

items, especially some asparagus and black Turkish figs, but worried that hardly anything smelt of much. "People think they need to squeeze fruit to see if it's ripe. The smell is a much better indicator."

Shortly he was happy that he had everything. He started telling strange women that the fish slab would knock the smile off their faces, "darling", and by the time he was doing Quasi-modo impressions down the aisles with a melon stuck up his crotch, I suspected we would soon be thrown out. The bill came to £15 odd.

I prepared Marco's meal at home to test it out. Although it sounds complicated, and I am not a particularly fast worker, it was ready and eaten within three hours of starting to cook. It was delicious, if I say so myself, and looked very stylish.

Hot Trout Quenelles
Ingredients:
Mousseline: 7oz pink trout fillets (weight after skinning and boning)
1 egg white
1 level tsp salt
Pinch cayenne pepper
8 fl oz double cream
1 tsp lemon juice

Julienne: 1 leek
1 fat carrot
Salt
Knob butter
Smoker: 4lb water
1½ the white wine vinegar
1 heaped tsp chopped shallot
4½ oz butter at room temperature cut into little pieces
Salt and pepper
½ tsp lemon juice

Preparation: Main ingredients for the mousseline should be thoroughly chilled before handling. Whizz bones and skinned trout fillets in a food processor for up to 30 seconds until very finely minced. Add egg white, salt, and cayenne. Process for 15 minutes. Add cream and process for up to another 20 seconds. Briefly whizz in lemon juice. Chill until needed.

Cut a 1½" in length from the peeled carrot and the same from the white part of the cleaned leek. Cut these both lengthways into "matchsticks". Strain and blanch in boiling water. Drain and rinse in cold water to refresh.

When you are ready to cook the mousseline, using two dessert spoons dipped in boiling water, form the mixture into egg-shaped quenelles (1 per portion). Drop into scalding salted water (keep just off the boil). Cook for 3 minutes, turn and cook for a further 3 minutes. Drain on kitchen paper. Meanwhile, gently boil the water, vinegar and shallot for the sauce to get over moderate heat until the mixture has reduced to a "saut" consistency. Lower heat and let mixture cool slightly then, whisking energetically all the time, gradually add the butter until you have a creamy sauce. This part of the process should take around 3 minutes, towards the end of which you should whisk faster and slightly raise the heat. Season, add lemon juice and take off heat.

Just before serving, reheat vegetables in very little water and a knob of butter. Arrange hot quenelles on warm plates, spoon a dessert spoon or so of warm sauce over each and scatter with vegetable strips.

[The main course was Duck Breast with Red Wine Sauce and Creamed Parsley, with Strawberry Grain to follow.]

From the Weekend edition of *The Independent*, Saturday 10 September 1988

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

FRANKLIN: Ted, musician, scholar and peerless folk singer, died peacefully on Sunday 6 September surrounded by his family. Funeral on Tuesday 15 September from the Sacred Heart Church at Eden Grove NZ, following 12 o'clock mass, to Islington Cemetery at High Road, East Finchley. All his friends past and present will be warmly welcomed to celebrate a remarkable and wonderful man and to mourn his passing.

LINCOLN: Dr Rosemarie Dorothy, died at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital on 7 September 1998. Funeral service will take place at St Faiths Crematorium on Friday 11 September 1998, at 4.30pm. No wreaths by request. However, flowers by request. Donations for the Institute of Psychosocial Medicine, c/o Gordon Barber Funeral Home, St Williams Way, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0AW, 01603 702460.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). Always include a daytime telephone number.

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Thomas Allen, operatic baritone, 54; Mr Michael Bukht (Barry), television food expert and radio executive, 57; Mrs Beryl Cook, painter, 72; Miss Louise Croft, former ambassador to Costa Rica, 63; Mr Brian Donohue MP, 50; Mr Ted Edgar, showjumper, 60; Baroness Emerson, chief officer, Nursing and Social Care, St John Ambulance, 63; Mr John Entwistle, rock guitarist, 54; Mr José Pellicano, singer, 53; Miss Judy Geeson, actress, 50; Professor Sir Chevalier Herbert Giles, Emeritus Professor of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool University, 77; Mr David Hamilton, disc jockey, 59; Mr Christopher Hogwood, harpsichordist, 57; Major John Makgill Critchton Maitland, former Lord-Lieutenant of Renfrewshire, 73; The Very Rev Michael Mayne, former Dean of Westminster, 69; Mr Frederick Moorfoot, former chairman, Kodak, 82; Mr Norman Morris, choreographer, 67; Lord Nolan, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 70; Mr Neville Owens, former chief constable, Lincolnshire Police Force, 60; Mr Arnold Palmer, golfer, 69; General Sir Antony Read, former governor of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, 85; Sir Peter Reynolds, former chairman, Ranks Hovis McDougall plc, 69; Mr Denis Richards, writer and historian of the Royal Air Force, 88; Dame Betty Ridley, former Third Church Estates Commissioner, 89; Mr Bill Rogers, golfer, 47; Sir Peter

Singer, High Court judge, 54; Dr Brian Smith, chairman, BAA, 70; Sir Robert Smith, former chairman, Alliance and Second Alliance Trust, 71; Sir Rupert Speir, former MP, 88; Mr Robert Wise, film director and producer, 84; Miss Fay Wray, actress, 91.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Quentin Massys, painter, 1466; Pope Julius III, 1487; Thomas Sydenham, physician, 1624; John Turberville Needham, RC priest and scientist, 1713; Niccolò Jommelli, composer, 1714; Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, painter and engraver, 1727; Sir John Soane, architect, 1753; Mungo Park, explorer of Africa, 1771; Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes, archaeologist, 1788; François Benoist, organist and composer, 1794; Philip Gilbert Hamerton, artist and writer, 1834; Sir John Robert Seeley, historian and essayist, 1834; Charles Sanders Peirce, philosopher, 1839; Robert Koldewey, archaeologist, 1855; Jeppe Aakjaer, poet and novelist, 1866; Vihaji Ranjitsinghi, Maharaja of Nawanagar, cricketeer, 1872; Franz Werfel, novelist and poet, 1890; Arthur Holly Compton, physicist, 1892; Bessie Love (Juanita Horton), actress, 1898; Cyril Vernon Connolly, writer, journalist and critic, 1903; Gwendoline Watford, actress, 1927.

Deaths: Louis IV (D'Outremere), King of France, 954; Dr Edward Pococke, scholar and orientalist, 1691; Dr Thomas Sheridan, scholar and translator, 1738; Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, feminist and writer, 1797; Johan Dominicus Fiorillo, painter and art historian, 1821; Ugo Foscolo, poet, 1827; Captain William Hobson, first Governor of New Zealand, 1842; George Bentham, botanist, 1844; Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, traveller, politician and poet, 1922; Arthur Reed Ropes ("Adrian Ross"), lyricist and librettist, 1933; Huey Pierce Long, US senator from Louisiana, assassinated 1935; Charles Cuff, founder of Cruft's dog show, 1938; Felix Bloch, physicist, 1983; Baltazar Johannes Vorster, former prime minister and president of South Africa, 1983.

On this day: The English defeated the Scots at the Battle of Pinkie, 1547; the Peace of Nystad was concluded between Sweden and Russia, 1721; the Battle of Lake Erie was fought when Commodore Oliver H. Perry defeated the British flotilla, 1813; Simon Bolivar became the dictator of Peru, 1823; the Duke of York's Theatre, London opened (as the "Trafalgar Square"), 1892; the first London production of the operetta *The Chocolate Soldier* was presented, 1910; the Treaty of St Germain (peace with Austria) was signed, 1919; the first motorway (autobahn) was completed in Germany, 1921; the first London production of the musical show *Sally* was presented, 1921; British forces arrived in France, 1939; in Norway, Lauritz Vid-

kum Quisling was sentenced to death for treason 1945; Sir Seretse Khama became the first President of the Republic of Botswana, 1966; the people of Gibraltar voted overwhelmingly to stay under British rule, 1967; Guinea-Bissau became independent, 1974.

Today is the Feast Day of St Ambrose Barlow, St Aubert of Avranches, St Finnian of Moville, Saints Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora, St Nemesian, St Nicholas of Tolentino, St Pulcheria, St Salvus or Salvy of Albi and St Theodard of Maestricht.

LECTURES

National Gallery: Rebecca Lyons, "Reflections (II). The Image of the Artist: 19th-century personae", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Philippa Barton, "Renaissance Ornament", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Judith Bronckhurst, "Sunshine and Shadow: William Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood", 1pm. British Museum: George Hart, "Governors of Ancient Aswan", 11.30am. National Portrait Gallery: Margaret Wolff, "Elizabeth Garrett Anderson", 1.10pm.

LORD SWAYTHLING

A Memorial Service will be held for Lord Swaythling at 5pm on Thursday 17 September 1998 at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, London NW8.

STRANGE The way that the mind works. Some of us cannot hear the pop of the cork being released from a bottle without the word *analeptic* springing to mind. Such is poetry. In his 1963 masterpiece *On The Circuit*, W. H. Auden describes an airborne reading tour of America, the fatigue of which makes

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE
analeptic, adj. or n.

him exclaim, "is this a milieu where I must... snatch from the bottle in my bag an *analeptic* swig?" It probably wasn't milk.

Of Latin and Greek origins, the word - meaning restorative - turns out not to be in contemporary usage after all, but petered out in the mid-19th century, when used to urge the curative properties of chocolate and sage. Auden was surely right to put his trust in the harder stuff.

The new high priest of fashion

Confess – you're praying for a fashion bible to show you the way. Search no more. With the Vatican's new range of designer chic, you need never be a sacrificial victim on the altar of style. By Annalisa Barbieri

For many years I had wanted an excuse to ring the Pope. And suddenly, here it was. Next week, it was announced. His Holiness will bring out a range of sunglasses, T-shirts and what were called, with a delicious lack of detail, leather items.

There were many things I had planned to say to him: "How can you find time to design outfits when you have all that corruption in the Church to deal with? How can you find time to design when you should be out on your balcony. Your Holiness, telling bad Catholic women that they shouldn't be using contraceptives?"

To be fair to John Paul II – but then why should I be? If it were up to him, I'd be on my 12th child by now. But, to try to be fair – he isn't the first to mix religion and fashion, and the Roman Catholic Church has been down this road before. Five years ago, their American branch allowed the Pope's name to be used on T-shirts, sunglasses and baseball caps, to raise money so that 150,000 young Catholics could go on a pilgrimage with the Pope to Colorado. They stopped short at "Pope on a Rope" soap, however.

Designers such as John Richmond and Dolce e Gabbana – all of them Roman Catholics – have for years used religious insignia on their garments in a most irreverent way. It's easy to see why. Religion, especially that creaky old ship Catholicism, is an easy target for those wanting to rebel.

When I was at convent school, we were taught that so much as putting the rosary over your head and wearing it as a necklace was a mortal sin. Pinning the bleeding heart of the Sacred Heart on your bodice as a fashion statement, let alone decorating gauze dresses with the Blessed Virgin Mary (both of which Dolce e Gabbana did last season) would have seen you on a diet of "Glory Be" for months. So if you want a quick and violent reaction, you can get it by sticking two fingers up at the Church.

"I was brought up in Manchester as a Catholic schoolboy and that guilt-ridden identity never really leaves you," explains John Richmond. "That anger manifested itself, especially in my early collections, with all those slashes and zips I did. But I'm calmer now, I've used the guilt and exorcised it from my mind on to material."

In 1990, the Vatican threatened to ban Madonna's *Blond Ambition* tour from Rome, saying that it was "one of the most satanic shows in the history of humanity". On stage, Madonna's props included blazing

crucifixes, tabernacles and a bed covered in cardinal scarlet linen to frolic on. She also got friendly with a dancer dressed as a priest.

The Vatican threatened to excommunicate her from the Catholic faith, the harshest punishment it can impose. One poor misguided bishop even said, "The crosses used by Madonna are not only obscene, but also surprising. It was thought she had been brought up in the spirit of religious faith." Him. Precisely why she was using them.

But don't listen to me, because (really) Catho-chic is the next big thing. The United States has already caught the first wave. Over there in "bible factory outlet" chain stores, you can buy items such as Latham's Testaments: each sweet is marked with a cross and wrapped in paper printed with an extract from the Bible. But their biggest seller is their "What Would Jesus Do?" range. These are bracelets and key fobs printed with WWJD and manufactured by a company called Fresco in Michigan (where Madonna is from – can't you see why she flipped?). The company (which claims that it doesn't have to market the product – "God sells it") have a terrific marketing angle. If you're wearing a bracelet with the WWJD initials and someone asks you what it means, you're meant to give it to them. So you have to replace it, and on and on it goes.

And the point of them? Well, when you're about to commit adultery or blow someone's brains out, you catch sight of your key fob or bracelet and think "what would Jesus do?", and then you do just that. Never mind that a great many paranoid types believe that God is telling them to kill anyway. World peace is sure to follow.

So, II Papa and his new range of accessories. I called the Vatican press office who confirmed its appearance next week, but would give no more details. They know the importance of designer secrecy, plus, I think, it was time for their siesta (they work only until 3pm).

Naturally, the Pope will not be designing the stuff himself; he will just license his name to raise money for Project 2000, which is a scheme that sends young Catholics on pilgrimages. The sunglasses (which will cost about £22 a pair) will be signed "Joannes Paulus PPII" in his own hand, and the words "Exist for Someone" will be printed on the frames.

I can but guess at the other designs in the range: possibly trousers with padded knees, for praying and taking kneeling penance on dried corn kernels; T-shirts that light up with slogans to

show if you've indulged in (unlawful) sex the night before.

What do people in the industry think of the Pope's attempt to break into fashion? "Why not," says Richmond. "He's keeping up with the times; he should modernise the Church."

"I like the affirming message that will be on the frame," says Andrew M Brown, associate editor of the *Catholic Herald*.

"If it's done for a good cause, then I'm not against it," says Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, who has designed robes for the Pope (and *Charlie's Angels*). "Times are changing; if it's a good design and well conceived, then it's definitely good. But sometimes I go to Lourdes, or some other place of pilgrimage, and the designs are not so good."

Brown agrees. "The Catholic Church does seem to attract incredibly tacky merchandise, and Catholics seem to have a great tolerance, even fondness, for it."

Hopefully, this range won't be tacky. Two years ago, the Pope personally chose de Castelbajac to design his robes, and those of his bishops and priests, for the Festival of Youth in Paris, which took place last year.

De Castelbajac, too, has always had a religious theme to his clothes (most of them are based on the T-shirt or cross shape) but his use of such designs is not a rebellion against his faith. "Oh no," he cries. "I have always had a religious influence in my designs."

"I went to Catholic boarding school, and those images stay with you – they are so powerful. But I don't do it as a trend. I am very much at peace spiritually, and I think that it is right for me to use these influences in fashion."

De Castelbajac said that the Pope (who gave him *carte blanche* with the designs) was very nice to him when they met. "He called me 'young man'," he sniggers. "But I am 49!" What a charmer!

After speaking to de Castelbajac, however, I think I may have to be more supportive of the Church, as the alternatives are even more horrifying.

"After I met the Pope," explains de Castelbajac. "I read a report that said the most famous symbol in the whole world, the one most recognised, was the 'M' of McDonald's. The cross was only number four (after Marlboro and Coca-Cola). I think it would be good if the cross went back to being number one again."

Oh dear. There's still time for that phone call. "Bless me, father, for I have sinned..."



Pope John Paul II is the spiritual leader of millions, but could they be forgiven for not following his fashion sense? *Ref Features*

'We don't want to upset the NRA'

Continued from page 1
an overpass and cracking a car windscreen below – an offence that in other circumstances might have landed him behind bars but in Springfield resulted in little more than a caution. His mother reacted to the incident by making Kip learn the Lord's Prayer and do household chores to earn his pocket money, but did not think to rid the house of firearms.

Kip surfed the family computer and taught himself how to make quite sophisticated bombs – something he boasted about both in a speech in class and in online messages on the Internet. His obsession disconcerted a handful of other parents enough to have him banned from their houses. In one case, he got his own back by squirting the letters K-I-P-L in whipped cream on the offending family's driveway.

His parents were both education specialists (his father had recently retired as a Spanish teacher from Thurston High) but they found themselves utterly unable to control their son – a fact that is not talked about much in Springfield, out of respect for their deaths. For a while they took him to a psychologist in Eugene, the liberal university town a few miles to the west.

The psychologist's only suggestion was to put Kip on Prozac. The



Ribbons of Promise in Springfield – but no discussion

PA

sessions ended after a few months. How could all this have gone unnoticed? According to Larry Bentz, there was nothing unusual about an adolescent talking about weapons and violence in class, so that in itself was not a cause for particular alarm. At one point Kip stopped submitting homework, but he started again immediately after the school had written to his parents. "This was a boy who responded to criticism. We could not tell he was on the verge of such a big crisis," Bentz adds.

There was nothing unusual, either, about Kip's access to firearms in a community like Springfield. While a few hard questions have been asked recently about where the system went wrong –

whether the police should have been obliged to detain the boy indefinitely after he was caught at school, for example – the key issue of restricting access to firearms has gone entirely by the board.

The Thurston shootings have spawned a local anti-violence movement called the Ribbon of Promise campaign, which has gone out of its way not to talk about gun control. "It's too political," says the campaign's spokeswoman, Jodi Henry. "We don't want to upset the NRA."

For the same reason, Ribbon of Promise is also failing to address the other key issue – the shrinking infrastructure of social services, and school counselling in particular. Education spending is diminish-

ing in most US states, often in favour of prison-building. In Oregon, funding has been hardest hit by a ceiling on property taxes that was introduced by popular vote seven years ago. Measure 5, like the very similar Proposition 13 that was introduced in California in the late Seventies, has choked school budgets and lowered standards so fast that a school like Thurston now has 35-40 students to a class, and only three counsellors on campus instead of five a few years ago.

All of which makes it much harder to detect, and treat, a potential Kip Kinkel. "We have no funds for preventive measures, whether you're talking about counselling or school security, and outside the school there are no resources for social services," Bentz says. "The Kinkels looked for appropriate help for their boy, but could not find it."

If that deficiency is felt in the relatively progressive climes of central Oregon, then it is little short of gaping in the backward southern communities where most of the other shootings took place.

"We are going to see more shootings in American schools this year, for sure," says one Springfield educator who does not want to be named.

"Nobody's talking about it, but everybody feels it in their bones."

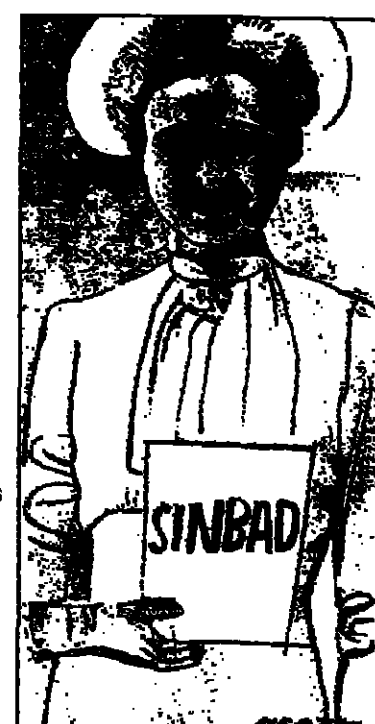
POETIC LICENCE

THE NEW BRITSPEAK BY MARTIN NEWELL
ILLUSTRATION: SHANE MCGOWAN

This decade has given us new words such as *himbo* and *Bobbitt*, and acronyms such as *Nimby* and *Sinbad* (single income, no boyfriend and absolutely desperate). A *Glossary for the Nineties*, which explains new Britspeak, is published this month

The pinnacle of cynical
For disco, work and media
Britspeak as she's broken
But nastier and greedier
Welded to the language
As quick as gum to pavement
Newly minted coinage
Of soundbite-as-enslavement

Literary Lego
For the witless in denial
To pigeonhole contemporaries
By status and by style
Pizza-parlour platitudes
Certified as "funny"
Tragic little terms of use
For humans, jobs and money



Commandeered from comics
For sofa spuds and slackers
Overused by overdogs
And radio station backers
Stolen in election spins
By earnest guys in braces
For happy-clappy candidates
With polytechnic faces

Prêt-à-porter phrases
For the person in a hurry
Guffed out by an ad-man
After beer and balti curry
Sprinkled on the word hoard
Like chocolate vermicelli
Bobbitt! Ha, ha, geoddi? Laugh?
I nearly smashed the telly

SPY 201520

How green is your trolley?

In Britain's shops and markets, organic food has never been more popular. But the industry itself does not enjoy such rude health. By Richard McClure

There are no takers at the tofu stall. The tattooed couple selling hemp products are not exactly swamped with customers, either. In fact, the Sunday crowds at Spitalfields indoor market, in east London, barely register the health food zealots and marijuana evangelists as they go about their weekly shop.

Over at the stalls selling organic produce, though, it is a very different story. The scrum of people has barely subsided since early morning. Customers come and go clutching bagloads of Guatemalan coffee beans, Leicestershire mince and other wholesome, nutritious foodstuffs.

Just a few years ago, the organic stallholders would have stood as idle as the tofu traders, their produce equally shunned as fodder for hair-shirted food fascists who haunt Holland & Barrett. Not now, though. The BSE and E coli scares have seen to that. "For me, there's nothing New Age or cranky about it," says Inga Phipps, a publisher, clasping a brace of red peppers. "I grew up in a farming community in Dorset and I know what they do to the animals, and the pesticides they use. I'm certainly not subscribing to the latest food fad. It's simply a matter of eating healthy."

She is not alone. According to a Mintel survey, organic food has shed its associations with "committed activists and vegetarians" and become a staple of the high street. Marks & Spencer has just reintroduced organic items after a hiatus of five years, while Sainsbury's plans to extend its range after a customer survey found a massive demand for pesticide-free food.

It seems we've all gone organic-maniac. At least, that's what the figures suggest: an annual UK business of £260m; a domestic market that has doubled since 1995; and a global market likely to increase

tenfold in eight years. It is a wonder we can find any chemical-coated food on the menu at all.

But behind the healthy glow of changing attitudes and upward sales predictions, the organic market is not quite as robust as it seems. Although Mintel reported that three-quarters of customers are "sympathetic" to the idea of buying natural foods, it also found that the produce is bought predominantly by the young, affluent and childless, while almost one-third of us have never even touched the stuff.

"It is definitely a middle-class market," says Thoby Young, whose Fresh Food Company supplies organic fruit and vegetable boxes around the country. "Organic production is spread throughout the UK, but our customers are mainly concentrated in the more prosperous parts of the South-east."

The main stumbling-block to organic's move into the mainstream is

methods more labour-intensive," says Elliott. "It is a better product, but the price is certainly prohibitive for some people - that's partly why the market is still so small."

Elliott, 33, who was born in Mississippi, set up Planet Organic with her business partner Jonathan Dwek in 1995. Catering to a fashionable clientele in Notting Hill, west London, the store was awarded Organic Retailer of the Year in

The bananas spilling out of their bags may be twice the price of the non-organic fare found at the local greengrocers, but at least they look appetising. Yet the erratic quality of the produce can be another deterrent to the consumer. With most shoppers accustomed to the visually perfect Class 1 products sold in supermarkets, it can be a shock to be confronted with the type of lewd-looking parsnip that used to appear on *That's Life*.

Inga Phipps was advised to go organic by her doctor after a serious illness. She still buys additive-free food at markets, but gave up on home-delivered veggie boxes owing to their indifferent quality.

"I didn't expect the food to be nicely polished but I expected it to be edible," she says. "It was all a bit ranky and mouldy, and you could have tied the carrots in a knot. It just wasn't good value for money. The last straw was when I ordered a 5lb box of fruit, most of which was taken up by a very heavy coconut."

The highly perishable nature of organic produce is not helped by the fact that so little is grown locally. Most organic carrots bought in Britain are grown in Denmark, Holland and Israel; overall Britain imports 70 per cent of its organic food.

"If more produce were home-grown that would certainly help to bring down the price," suggests Elliott. "Yes, the market is tiny, but if British farmers get their act to-

gether, there is huge potential." So far, however, our farmers are reluctant to rise to the challenge. Of the UK's 150,000 farms, just 0.5 per cent are registered as organic.

Earlier this year, the Government increased its Organic Aid Scheme - the subsidy it pays farmers to encourage conversions from chemical methods - by a hefty 80 per cent, a tacit admission that the organic movement has stalled.

'The biggest reason why the organic movement has failed to take off is that farmers are so stuck in their ways'

Graeme and Vivienne Matcravers are among the few farmers in Leicestershire who have ditched synthetic pesticides and fertilisers in favour of natural alternatives. Opening the five-bar gate to their farm in Long Whaddon is like walking into an H.E. Bates novel. All the clichés of idyllic rural life materialise before your eyes. Chickens scur the yard for grain, shaggy dogs doze in the shade, while wholesome children - Benjamin, Amy and Murray - befriend the customers buying organic food from the farm shop.

Like Renee Elliott, the Matcravers represent the new generation of young, environmentally concerned

entrepreneurs who are making a good living from the green economy. The couple, both of whom are in their mid-thirties, met at agricultural college and farmed a Yorkshire smallholding before moving to Manor Farm four years ago. "My father was a mathematician which helped us a great deal - we didn't have the heavy weight of coming from farming families," says Matcravers, slipping on his Wellington boots to show

off his 300 acres. "Coming into it from the outside means we had no preconceived ideas. We didn't have an ingrained 'pesticide culture'."

As a showcase for the organic movement, the farm plays host to around 200 farmers each year, all contemplating conversion from traditional methods. Although applications for organic certification have risen since the Government raised the level of subsidy, most leave Manor Farm unconvinced.

To achieve Soil Association accreditation as a licensed organic producer, land must lie fallow for two years before crops can be grown or animals grazed. With other farm sub-

sidies making it more profitable to continue growing chemical crops, than setting the land aside, it is hardly surprising that most farmers opt for the status quo.

"Most of them are so used to a chemical way of production that they can't accept you can do it with out," says Matcravers. "The biggest reason why the organic movement has failed to take off is that farmers are so stuck in their ways."

So far, Manor Farm is a bountiful anomaly in an otherwise bleak landscape. Walk its fields and you will see skylarks nesting in restored meadows and carpets of red clover naturally enriching the soil. But peer over the hedge into the neighbouring farm and you find the true face of British farming: scarred fields sprayed with organophosphates and devoid of wildlife.

There is hope, however. Across from the farmhouse, the Matcravers have converted a granary into a classroom to accommodate parties of local schoolchildren who visit the fields of wheat, barley and free-range livestock, learning the virtues of crop rotation and sustainable, organic agriculture. Vivienne Matcravers is optimistic. "There is a lot of interest from younger people in the organic lifestyle," she says. "We are in a transitional phase and it may take some time for attitudes to change completely. But hopefully our children will be the ones to make it reach fruition."



Vivienne Matcravers and her daughter Amy feed the chickens at their organic farm in Long Whaddon, Leicestershire

Adrian Denny

'Although it is a better quality product, the price is certainly prohibitive to some people - that's why the market is still so small'

its higher price - on average it is between 25 to 50 per cent more expensive than its conventional counterparts. According to the Consumers' Association, one in four people is actively put off by the extra cost, while few supermarkets bother to stock organic food at branches that serve the poorer parts of the country.

Renee Elliott, founder of Planet Organic, Britain's only "natural food supermarket", agrees that the high prices effectively exclude large swathes of the population. "The higher cost to the consumer is justified by growers on the grounds that yields are less reliable and their

1997, but plans to open another outlet have so far come to naught. "We hope to open another London store soon," she says, "but research has shown that outside the capital, only towns with the demographics of Windsor or Oxford could sustain a store the size of ours."

At Spitalfields, the luxury nature of organic produce is not disputed. "We're very lucky in that we can afford to buy it," chorus Sam and Sarah, two dancers who have travelled from south London to stock up for the week. "We realise it's something of an indulgence, but we need to be healthy for our work, so good food is a priority."

I want to mourn my mother, not Diana

WHAT VIRGINIA SAYS

There is very little Tina can do, except perhaps kick herself for arranging the funeral on the same day as that of Diana, Princess of Wales, which is a fairly pointless way of spending the time. But perhaps it may help her to remember that fury and impotence are common symptoms of bereavement, and it's quite likely that if she were not feeling enraged about the Diana publicity she would be venting her anger somewhere else - on the doctors who attended her mother, on a family member, or even on her mother, for dying. Diana's death is just a focus for completely natural feelings that would pop up somewhere, whatever had happened.

Look what happened to the people of the nation, after all. They needed something to vent their anger and impotence on and they picked the Queen and the Royal Family as their scapegoats, furious that none of them had come to see them, angry that the flag on Buckingham Palace was not at half-mast, shocked that the Queen had not addressed the nation, and so on.

And witness Diana's brother Charles, who vented his own anger on the press and the paparazzi, and was so enraged that he took the opportunity to let out his rage from the Westminster Abbey pulpit. As

far as a funeral goes, there is often something about it that drives one wild with fury, too. When my mother died I was livid that the vicar referred to her as "Janet", which was on her death certificate, instead of "Janey", the name by which she was known.

When my father died I was appalled at the rudeness of the vicar, who never came and shook hands after the service, but scampered away immediately on his bicycle to visit the sick.

At my father's memorial service I was seething and miserable because my mother was not mentioned at all when his life was celebrated.

Normally I could not care less about things like this, but because anger is often sizzling very near the surface after a death, it is quite common for people to find something in a funeral to get enraged and offended by.

And is Tina really sure that people didn't come to her mother's funeral because of Diana's funeral on the same day?

Some people must have come, surely, and perhaps the others would not have come anyway. It is unlikely that they were all glued to their televisions, unless they were totally inhuman.

Perhaps Tina felt cheated of some kind of grieving process when the whole nation was in mourning

last year. Interestingly, the national association for the bereaved, Cruse, found that during the big Diana gloom, phone calls to them dropped markedly. It was as if everyone was suddenly permitted to grieve, and did not need to get hold of a counselling agency to say it was OK.

So it is not surprising that Tina felt that her own bereavement was overshadowed by everyone else's. It is obvious that many people who were apparently grieving for Diana were in fact grieving for their own personal losses in the past, and Tina was deprived of one of the only perks of bereavement - that of feeling special. Normally, when you are bereaved everyone's attitude to you changes; you are treated with kid gloves and cared for like a china doll.

Tina must have missed out a lot on that, with everyone crying about the Princess.

As for all the publicity, is Tina worried that it will remind her each year of her mother's death when she really wants to try to forget? The sad truth is that one rarely forgets, and on anniversaries of deaths all the old feelings often return for a few days.

Long after Diana's death is forgotten in the media - which it will be - it is likely that Tina will still be hit by pangs of fury, sadness and impotence.

DILEMMAS



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Tina's mother died on the same day as Diana and very few people came to the funeral, as it was also on the same day as Diana's. Tina has found it hard to cope with the anniversary publicity and dreads it happening year after year. She feels furious and impotent. What can she do?

It was my worst week. Like Tina, but unlike Tina, my personal experience of the two weekends involving Diana's death and funeral was traumatic. The first weekend, I should have been arranging a joint holiday. Instead, I told my deceiving husband to visit his transatlantic girlfriend, who had been blighting our life for many years, and sort himself out. By the following weekend he had booked a holiday with her. He duly left me and our two children. I am not ashamed to admit I was mourning a 20-year marriage, not the Princess. SUE Bedford

The pain will subside. When my own mother died, I felt such overwhelming anger and frustration that I thought I could not bear it, but it did pass gradually. The fact that your mother's death and funeral coincided

with that of Princess Diana is nothing more than an unfortunate and painful coincidence. Whatever date it had been would be remembered by you with pain.

The process of grieving is complex and individual, but usually follows a pattern, from stunned disbelief

through anger to eventual acceptance, when you can look back with pleasure at shared memories, even if you do not believe this now.

Take one day at a time; talk about her to your friends and other family members. Look at photographs, talk to her out loud if it feels better, maybe visiting

places you both enjoyed. The pain does subside, and pleasant memories take its place. MRS B BARNES Bournemouth, Dorset

Choose another date. My mother was an amusing, gregarious, 64-year-old grandmother of six when she died suddenly, five years ago, on 31 August.

Taking into account that 31 August will always be devoted to Diana for reflective soul-searching, I made 29 August my mother's day for visiting her memorial and thinking of her peacefully. On 31 August I didn't read any paper, watch TV or listen to the radio, so the coverage didn't intrude into my thoughts. There will never be a 31 August now that will not mention Diana. For those of us who have more personal tributes to bear, we will just have to make our own arrangements. EDWINA LARNER Bath

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Dear Virginia, I've lived with my mother since I was 10, when my parents split up. She's a lovely mum, but now I'm 16 she's taken to coming out with me and my mates. They all like her, as she can be really good fun. But she borrows my clothes, and comes out to clubs and gets drunk sometimes, and people say we're like sisters. She's also very attractive and flirts a lot. I didn't mind at first, but now I'm getting really brought down by it. I don't seem to have any private life. What can I do? Gina

Letters are welcome, and everyone who has a suggestion quoted will be sent a bouquet from *Interiors Send comments and dilemmas to Virginia Ironside, Features Department, 'The Independent', 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, fax 0171-293 2182, or e-mail: dilemmas@independent.co.uk - giving your postal address for sending a bouquet.*

Desperately seeking Siouxsie

She may have disbanded her Banshees, split with her record company and got married, but the queen of punk is back on the warpath. By Paul Burston

The Banshees have gone, together with the panda eyes and electrified hair—reminders of Siouxsie Sioux in all her petrified punk-gothy. These days it's just her and gig, the Banshees drummer married seven years ago. They live in a large house near Toulouse in the south of France, with a garage and three cats—her “babies”. They are in London to promote their latest incarnation as the Creatures—the band that started life as an experimental side project way back in 1981, when the Banshees were at their primitive best. At 41, Siouxsie looks surprisingly young, remarkably beautiful, yet utterly mummy—a different creature, the spiky wait who rode the first rock wave of punk in bondage and swastika armband. Until something of the old Siouxsie came. Sat across the table with a giggle by her side, she's chatty, friendly even, only there is a certain steeliness about her. Even without the warpaint, she is a pro for combat. She doesn't really do interviews. The trouble with journalists, she says pointedly, is they only see the surface. She read somewhere recently that she had popped her wild-child persona for a domestic drudgery and that she was planning a family. She says: “I don't know where they get that from.”

It's two years since Siouxsie announced that she was folding the Banshees “with dignity”—a barbed reference to the Sex Pistols, who were cashing in on the 20th anniversary of punk with their *Filthy Animals* reunion tour. “I didn't like the idea of it all turning into a nostalgia trip,” she says. “The Banshees it was very hard to get away from that. Maybe as partly our fault, but a lot of it is other people's perceptions of what we were. And the whole anniversary of punk thing really upended what I thought was going. I was so disillusioned. I remember thinking: ‘I don't want to do with this.’”

Two bands have been so shackled by their history as the Banshees. A few performers have been so personally haunted by the past as Siouxsie. With the obvious exception of Madonna, it is difficult to name another female pop icon of the past 20 years who has spawned so many adoring imitators. You still see them now—all those black-haired, black-eyed Siouxsies, ghostly reminders of a past she'd rather leave behind. Do they bother her? She hesitates before answering. “It's flattering. But they'll grow out of it and find their own way of expressing themselves. That look came from having no money and enjoying dressing up. It was just a fun thing. It was never ‘my image’. Also, it was a reaction to when I was growing up, and women

album, but I really can't understand what she's done to herself now. All that cosmetic surgery and restyling, just to end up looking like Goldie Hawn. I don't get it.”

There is no big marketing campaign surrounding the relaunch of the Creatures, and certainly no Versace photo shoots. Dropped by Polydor shortly after the Banshees split, they have their own label, Sioux Records. They manage themselves these days, and work a lot from home. No, they don't have anything so elaborate as a home studio—just Budgie's drum kit set up in the dining room and a dictaphone for keeping track of their ideas.

“It's very low-fi,” Siouxsie explains. “It's just bits lying around. So it isn't a case of saying ‘I've got an idea, let's set things up’ and then losing the moment. The whole way we work now is a lot more spontaneous than before. I wouldn't call it primal, exactly. It's just a lot less covered by embellishments.”

It seems to suit them very well. The recent “Eraserhead” EP found them retreading familiar ground with a renewed vigour. They have a single, “2nd Floor”, out next month and are putting the finishing touches to an album, parts of which are on a par with anything they have ever done.

And they've been touring. Back in May they performed two sell-out gigs at the Garage, in Islington, north London. More recently, they toured America with John Cale, formerly of the Velvet Underground. In New York they performed the Velvets classic, “Venus in Furs”, as an encore. “That song was made for Siouxsie to sing,” Budgie says proudly. “Yeah,” she agrees. “And not somebody singing it in a rollneck sweater.” Budgie laughs and pretends to be shocked by her bitchiness—“Miaow!” She purrs and miaows back, scratching the air with her fingers.

It's an act they almost didn't pull off. There was a time, immediately after the break with Polydor, when they seriously considered calling it a day. “It was as if we didn't fit a particular category, so we weren't allowed to continue,” Siouxsie recalls. “There was a point where I thought: ‘Oh well, I'll just pack up



Siouxsie Sioux and husband Budgie, still champions of the DIY philosophy to music that spawned punk

Philip Sinden

and open a flower shop or something.”

Even recently, they had difficulty securing live bookings. “We were just dying to get out and play. We asked around, but there was a real resistance. The music promoters over here are governed by the corporate way of thinking, of tying in tour, album, tour, album.”

“The response was: ‘When's your record due?’ All of a sudden you are being told that you can't play because you are not promoting a record. I was so pissed off with that attitude. So, fingers firmly stuck up at them, we went ahead and did those shows at the Garage.”

As well as proving that they could

still cut it five, the shows marked a return to the intimacy of those early Banshees performances. It's the closest they get to a nostalgia trip. “It's been a long time,” Siouxsie says wistfully. “I've missed that contact. With the Banshees, it developed into a situation where you went out on the road when you'd completed a record, and did some big production in a hall or a theatre. There was that distance. And I missed that feeling of starting again, of playing stuff that people don't know.” Budgie nods in agreement.

This feeling of rejuvenation dominates their conversation, not least when they describe their plans to release a remix version of the new

album. It sounds surprising at first, until you remember that the Banshees were one of the first non-dance bands to embrace the concept of the remix. And with the Creatures' sound relying so heavily on drums and percussion, it was only a matter of time before the world of dance music finally caught up with them.

There's another logic to it, too, something which makes this latest enterprise a natural extension of everything they've done. It's the spirit in which a lot of contemporary dance music is produced—people tucked away in their bedrooms, making records on their computers. It's the fact that, with a little bit of

technology, “anyone can do it”. To put it another way, the world the Creatures inhabit now is a lot like the one they first sprang from, a lot like punk.

The moment the words are out of my mouth, Siouxsie Sioux's eyes light up. “Yeah!” she says emphatically. “Brilliant! It's DIY. It's back to DIY. That's the key for me. DIY. Do it yourself, with as little interference as possible.”

The Creatures play the University of London Union on Friday and Saturday; their single, “2nd Floor”, is released on 5 October; Banshees And Other Creatures is the subject of *Rock Family Trees* on BBC3 on Saturday 25 September

Tapmeisters meet body poppers

Cool Heat Urban Beat play fast and loose with the laws of physics. Louise Levene gets disoriented

AS IS traditional call-and-response dance: the more you call, the more they'll respond. The Edinburgh audience called and called. Cool Heat Urban Beat made their British debut at the festival last month with a show that had all the hallmarks of a global campaign for trainers—jumpy, jiving young men with baggy trousers and amplifiers the size of a bus. But the obvious youth appeal is only half the story. I think one would be hard put to find anyone who wouldn't have a good time—it isn't particularly loud.

Cool Heat Urban Beat's 10-man crew is a collaboration between

Hip Hop outfit and Harbin Van Cayseele's Urban Tap trio. The two styles collide in a gang war between traditional tap and the more modern dances of the street. The whole Sharks/Jets set-up is a little contrived but it has respectable roots in all the great tap-dancing acts where each soloist tries to top the last routine.

After an initial three-man tour de force the tap dancers each do party pieces. Rod Ferrone, dressed like a lost member of Madness in dark suit and bowler hat, enacts an elaborate

tap mambo, his feet stealing their rhythm from the congas like an extra element in the rhythm section. Fellow tapper Max Pollak's feet pulsate with an angry rhythm that suggests the skipping feet of the boxer or the relentless tattoo of fists against a punch ball.

The most obvious parallel for this display of testosterone tap is the successful global touring phenomenon Tap Dogs, but whereas Tap Dogs is essentially a formula that recruits useful hoofers and turns them into clogging Chippendales, these guys

dance with the whole body—the Tap Dogs were pretty well dead from the waist up.

In the final sequences all-out war is declared and the tap dancers attempt to synopsize the enemy into submission. The pounding footwork of Van Cayseele forces big Rennie Harris to melt into the floor, his disarticulating bulk crumpling down into a disjointed heap.

The tapmeisters were a hard act to follow but the break dancing and body popping were little short of astonishing. Some moves were

familiar—as when the dancer's curled body hits the floor spinning then comes to rest like a discarded coin—but I don't think I've ever seen anyone strip off their shell suit at the same time.

The magical final solos were of this order, big bodies playing fast and loose with the laws of physics and doing tricks that pushed back the boundaries of belief.

By the end, I was losing my grip on reality. Did I really see a man glide the width of the stage on his head? Sawing Anita Harris in half has nothing on this.

Now at The Peacock Theatre, London WC2 to 27 September (0171-314 3800)

A medieval smash hit

PROMS

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN
SEQUENTIA
ROYAL ALBERT HALL

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN—12th-century abbess, composer, poet, mystic, prophet and correspondent of popes, kings and archbishops—has also become a peculiarly 20th-century phenomenon.

The Hyperion recording that launched the modern interest in her work in 1982 has sold 280,000 copies, an astonishing number for any classical record, let alone one of sparsely accompanied medieval hymns. Hildegard's achievement was so vast, and so unlikely, that she can be whatever you want her to be: feminist icon, new-age musician, the first individualist—just fill in your own enthusiasm.

So it is hardly surprising that Hildegard is also good box office and she managed to draw a sizeable crowd to the Albert Hall for the late-night Prom by the early-music group Sequentia of her *Ordo Virtutum*, “The Play of the Virtues”, with which Sequentia is touring to celebrate the 900th anniversary of Hildegard's birth.

The *Ordo Virtutum* is a religious allegory set to music, a sort of proto-opera which presents the struggle of a wavering soul to reach heaven. The Virtues (Humility, Obedience, Chastity, Charity and so on) gather to help the soul overcome the temptations of the devil, who ends up bound, and crushed underfoot.

Words and music were presented in the barest fashion, though using (as many of these late-night Proms have done) the huge space of the Albert Hall to add a dramatic edge to the proceedings.

In this instance the Soul, symbolising the journey she had to undertake, wandered from the stage into the prompting area, where the Devil, arising from the darkened stalls in a black cowl, came to sweep

her away. The Devil's next sarcastic interjections were delivered from a first-tier box, his form barely visible in the gloom but his spoken words, drily delivered, cutting through the silence and contrasting effectively with the elegant melisma of the voices on stage.

Otherwise, there is not much drama in Hildegard's ambitious text. The Proms prospectus promised a Devil who “speaks, grunts and makes gross noises”; in the event, he was rather well behaved. Indeed, he was hammed the part any more would have sat ill with the austerity of the music. Although polyphonic singing was beginning to emerge elsewhere in Hildegard's time, she preferred to stick with the expressive, single-line chant melodies of the tradition in which she grew up, in the Rhineland around Cologne—and the *Ordo Virtutum* consists of little else.

Sequentia provided some textual variety, supplementing those devilish interjections through occasional instrumental interludes for the richer sounds of three medieval fiddles and flute.

The Virtues—18 staging parts for the 18 nuns in Hildegard's own convent—were taken by the nine female voices of Sequentia, all draped in long white robes, dignified and calm. The four instrumentalists, also costumed, moved in from the wings and off again in slow processional. But it was the unemphatic fascination of Hildegard's long, swooping chants that held the attention.

MARTIN ANDERSON

Hare comes face to face with his faith

WE ALWAYS tried to get Judi Hare to do this sort of thing,” says the distinguished dramatist. “I told Hare self-deprecatingly, ‘telling words into other people's mouths has been his forte up to now. But, though, in his first theatrical performance since he played Thomas Cromwell in a school production of *A Man For All Seasons*, his words are pouring from the creases (or the Hare's) mouth.”

The occasion is *Via Dolorosa*, the playwright's witty, passionate and ghly thought-provoking personal meditation on a recent trip he made to Israel, a state which, like him, is debating its half-century. An atheist from a Christian background, he'd declined previous invitations, but then he began to notice that, for some time now, faith and belief have been his subjects as a dramatist. What intrigued him was the

seemingly stark contrast between Britain and Israel. In the former, it feels as though you don't have to believe in anything any more; in the latter, beliefs and fighting stands are mandatory. So off he went.

One of the many revealing comic moments in Hare's travelogue comes when he is explaining his perception of Britain to the Israeli cast rehearsing his play, *Amy's View*, at a theatre in Tel-Aviv. He tells them that Tel-Aviv may be the worst place in the world to perform *Amy's View*; as here, everyone passionately argues about where their country is heading. In England, on the other hand, Tony Blair is all things to all men. He'll do whatever he thinks is popular. At which point, an Israeli actor promptly pipes up: “Oh please, please—send us your Tony Blair!”

You begin to see where this man is coming from. As Hare travels and

THEATRE
VIA DOLOROSA
ROYAL COURT UPSTAIRS
AT THE AMBASSADORS
LONDON

meets people, it becomes clearer that the divisions between secular and religious Jews are as deep, and sometimes as virulent, as those between Jew and Arab. For the secular brigade, the idea that stones and land could matter more than a life is profoundly un-Jewish, a deformation started by the Six Day War.

By contrast, the Jews he visits who have settled as an act of defiance, on hitherto Arab territory, see nothing anomalous or farcical in requiring the services of 4,000 Israeli troops to defend an enclave of 521 of them. It's no paradox that his hostess here withdraws from Hare when

she realises that his wife, Nicole Farhi, is Jewish. She doesn't approve of assimilationists. And when Hare crosses from Israel to the Gaza strip (a process likened to moving from California to Bangladesh), he finds that the Arabs are just as internally divided, by corruption, in a society where there are more people in prison under Arafat than there were under the Israelis.

On the stripped-back, atmospherically lit stage, Hare's performance begins a bit awkwardly. In his white shirt and trousers, he has the air, at the start, of a touchingly self-conscious head prefect and captain of cricket. He builds impressively in confidence, though, bringing to life a whole gallery of interlocutors, not through impersonation or point-scoring, but through the often comic intensity with which he reports, and engages with, their arguments.

What gives the evening its emotional pull is the way the dramatist, in the light of what he sees, questions his own values and re-examines his own preoccupations with faith and society. Watching pious pilgrims kneel to kiss a sacred stone whose position is hotly disputed prompts him to ask what it is they are kissing: a stone or an idea? This leads him to wonder, more generally and reverberatingly: “Are we where we live, or are we what we think. What matters? Stones or ideas? Stones or ideas?” Hare's excellent script and Stephen Daldry's beautifully modulated production leave such questions resonating powerfully in the mind. We can only hope that they decide to take this piece to Northern Ireland.

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FILM

Killing time killing Nazis

THE BIG PICTURE



RYAN GILBEY

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)
DIRECTOR: STEVEN SPIELBERG
170 MINS
STARRING TOM HANKS
AND TOM SizEMORE

Saving Private Ryan tells the story of an eight-man mission to locate and rescue a single soldier out of the thousands scattered behind enemy lines in the Second World War, and it has the notable distinction of featuring a career-best performance from the actor Tom Hanks, though it is unlikely that the film will be defined by this in the minds of those who see it. What will be branded on the memory are a pair of visceral, devastating 25-minute battle sequences by which the movie is bookended. Or rather, almost bookended.

What actually opens and closes the film are modern-day scenes – an elderly war veteran trooping to a cemetery with two successive generations of family in tow, his children pious, his grandchildren respectfully frowning their brows. It's less a case of the film introducing itself, than Spielberg announcing his ideal audience profile.

This kind of contextualising is nothing more than an inexperienced screenwriter's way of justifying the story which is about to be told. The device didn't work when Ken Loach employed it in *Land and Freedom*, though he had the defence that the Spanish Civil War still retained a degree of obscurity. You may feel less secure placing yourself in the hands of a film-maker who structures his movie to accommodate those members of the audience who are a bit fuzzy about that Second World War business. In its opening and closing minutes, *Saving Private Ryan* offers a reminder that the freedom you take for granted today was secured by conflicts resolved half a century ago. Funny that we couldn't be trusted to detect these resonances unassisted. Funny that the tale couldn't simply be told.

Saving Private Ryan is a film of interesting if contrived contrasts. One of the most pointed examples may be purely coincidental. As the Allied troops disembark on Omaha



Effortless power: some of Tom Hanks's (right) best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness

beach, the camera drifts underwater where a single bullet passes through the bodies of two soldiers. You can't shake the echo of an identical scene in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*: that film was set in the Second World War as well, but back then the violence was fun; the stray bullet provoked laughs, not gasps. It's a telling lesson in the choreography of context – the same director, the same act of violence even, orchestrated to achieve entirely different results. Not for the first time, you may have a sense of Spielberg wrestling with his own inflexible image.

For most of the film, though, he is wrestling with an inflexible screenplay. The combat footage which Spielberg shoots is an attempt to create as close to a subjective, unstructured viewpoint as is humanly possible when you're hugging cameras around in the mud and then pruning the results down to the

last millisecond in the comfort of your editing suite. What the screenwriter Robert Rodat has created is a piece of work which achieves the opposite effect. It is a model of organisation. Which would be just dandy if the film didn't begin by expressing a desire to articulate the chaos of war. Sure, bullets fly out of thin air, and you're as likely to be killed by a bomb that you are attempting to plant as by a wily German sniper. But nothing else about life during wartime is so arbitrary.

Did you know, for example, that squads were comprised of one member from each of the various personality groups? The team which Captain John Miller (Hanks) is left with after the massacre at Omaha Beach is a good example. There is the gruff Ernest Borgnine bulldog (Tom Sizemore). The cheeky Brooklyn wide-boy (Edward Burns). The intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone respects (Giovanni Ribisi)

and the intelligent, sensitive type whom everyone ridicules because he hasn't learned to kill yet (Jeremy Davies). But don't worry. He will. Rodat doesn't really go in for characterisation. In its place, everyone gets a story to tell, most of the stories expressing unexpected sensitivity, philosophical depth and sturdy heterosexuality, often all at the same time. It may be the single brilliant stroke of the script to deny that privilege to Miller. As the soldiers kill time, waiting for Nazi tanks to roll over the bridge which they have crammed with explosives, Miller mentions something which brings him happiness: the thought of his wife, pruning the garden. "Tell me about your wife and those rose-bushes," someone asks. "No," Miller says quietly but firmly. "That one I save just for me."

Hanks may be one of the only actors who could carry off a role as predictably righteous as Captain Miller

and still suggest that there are parts of him no one will ever get to see. It helps that his face is starting to age and crease – his skin looks as rumpled and tattered as his uniform. And yet he can still draw on that boyish, flashing grin when he needs to. Some of his best moments are those which suggest a short circuit in his saintliness – when he witnesses two soldiers gunning down a German prisoner, you can't be sure exactly where his evident sympathies are directed.

The effortless power of Hanks's work provides another unwelcome contrast, underlining the clumsiness of Spielberg's manipulative techniques, which grow steadily less sophisticated with each film he makes. The clash between the battle sequences in *Saving Private Ryan* and the material in between is jarring and unhappy, and it comes very suddenly with a single camera movement and a murmur of John

Williams's mournful score. After the indiscriminate carnage on Omaha Beach, the camera stops juddering and starts sweeping gracefully across the bodies lapped by the rusty-red waves, finally settling on the kitbag of a dead soldier – Pvt Ryan. From there, the film goes on to reveal that only one of the four Ryan brothers remains alive, and Captain Miller and his squad are dispatched to find him as bugles start tooting on the soundtrack, and you realise that the opening burst of formalist daring was only there to lull you into a false sense of insecurity. It isn't the explicit violence of the opening section which is shocking – anyone who braved the Vietnam scenes of the Hughes Brothers' *Dead Presidents* is unlikely to experience peristalsis at the sight of a heap of unspooled intestines. Rather, the relentless motion of the camera, and Spielberg's disregard for visual and aural coherence, are

more unsettling than any of the atrocities that he stages. There are juxtapositions here which are the work of a great craftsman – between the dispassionate typists coldly bashing out tragic telegrams, and the sensitive voiceover reading their contents; between the gruff, bulky soldiers slouching around a gramophone, and the fragility of the Edith Piaf record which is being played on it; between the tragedy of your friends losing their legs and the urgency with which you must remove their ammunition and leave them for dead. But a director who switches so cleanly between two disparate styles can easily appear disloyal to both. It may be that the film's tentative, non-committal closing image – a gossamer-thin American flag rendered grey and bloodless by the sun blazing through its fabric – says more about Spielberg than anything in the preceding three hours.

ALSO SHOWING

LA VIE DE JESUS (NC) BRUNO DUMONT ■ COUSIN BETTE (15) DES MCANUFF ■ BABYMOTHER (15) JULIAN HENRIQUES



A film on heat: The real star of 'Baby Mother' is the costume designer

them which approaches the essence of compassionate film-making. The picture neatly underlines the boredom of Freddy and his pals with grim humour. What do you do when you're growing up in Nowheresville? You play in the marching band. You squirt around on your piddly motorbike. You sit in parked cars and sing. Dumont has captured this world with painful accuracy. The combination of impulsive camerawork and a cast of beautifully unselfconscious non-

professionals gives the picture a raw tenderness that is quite breathtaking. And the attention to detail can really sting – Marie's delicate bird-shaped earrings, or the spattered faces of boys who have spent their afternoons spray-painting cars. But then maybe that's just because I'm from Essex, where you really aren't anyone at all until you get your first signet ring and speeding fine.

There isn't any substance to the comedy *Cousin Bette*, set in 19th century France and adapted from

the novel by Balzac, though as a frothy confection it can't be faulted. Jessica Lange plays the title character, a spinster who slips into the role of benefactor to a feral young sculptor (Aden Young). But in pursuing both validation and love from the boy, Bette inadvertently begins a chain of jealousy and betrayal that implicates everyone she knows, from her late cousin's vain husband (a very funny, very poignant Hugh Laurie) to a rapacious actress (Elizabeth Shue).

It may be disappointing that the film doesn't exploit more than just the usual trappings of the costume drama, but then there is still a lot to be said for having bosoms, ostentatious embroidery and the sight of British character actors twiddling stringy moustaches and being crisply bitchy to one another. Although the staging can be flat, the director, Des McAnuff, keeps the picture rattling along with sufficient pace and flair to evoke favourable comparisons with Richard Lester. It is the presence of Jessica Lange, though, which gives *Cousin Bette* its alluring glimmer. With her deep, molasses eyes and purring voice, she is perfect as the scheming spider who gets stuck in her own web. Some trick to make malevolence this seductive.

The British reggae musical *Baby Mother* is vibrant and delightful, and you wouldn't expect to find those words associated with something set in Harlesden. A "baby mother" is a parent who is still practically a child herself; the film's heroine (Anjela Lauren Smith) is just such a woman, and a would-be reggae star to boot – if only she could find a way to negotiate child-care and the interference of a calculating boyfriend. Despite its gritty tone, the picture buzzes with vitality and colour, often literally: it sometimes appears that the film stock has been splashed with Day-Glo paint. Indeed, the movie's real star is the costume designer Annie Curtis Jones, who leads up the cast with electric blue wigs, feather boas, plastic separates and gold chains as thick as arms. Crucially, the robust, sexy songs can make you tingle. This film is on heat.

All films on release from tomorrow

VIDEO WATCH

MIKE HIGGINS

Chasing Amy (the), available to rent now
The concluding instalment of Kevin Smith's loose New Jersey trilogy is an honourable attempt to scale the profane heights that *Clerks* reached and its successor, *Mall Rats*, so conspicuously failed to. Once again, Smith focuses on a trio of intelligent, sharp but cynically parochial twenty-somethings who refer to the universe beyond their suburban lives only when they need to give their jokes a bit of worldly breadth.
Plot is only useful in so much as it presents his characters a new topic for ironic deconstruction. So it is when Alyssa (Joey Lauren Adams), a bisexual comic book author, falls for fellow writer Holden (Ben Affleck), to the chagrin of his partner and best friend, Banky (Jason Lee). In terms of bringing any depth to the characters, though, Smith's handling of Holden's tempestuous affair with Alyssa and Banky's neanderthal response to it is one-dimensional. Smith seems to think male emotional immaturity is both hilarious (which it is) and an irreversible state of affairs (which it isn't), and uses Alyssa to prove his comic book thesis.
Amistad (15), available to rent from tomorrow
In case the blood-spattered first reel of *Saving Private Ryan* seems out of character for Steven Spielberg, here's an earlier film of his with a similarly gruesome opening sequence, in which 44 enslaved

Africans aboard the eponymous ship slip their chains and kill almost all their captors.
While abolitionists Theodore Joseph (Morgan Freeman) and Louis Taplin (Stellan Skarsgård) team up with huckster property lawyer (Matthew McConaughey) to secure the Africans' freedom, Spielberg shudders the narrative to the tale of their enslavement and transport across the Atlantic, as recounted by Cinque (Djimon Hounsou).
Spielberg is also unhappy with the ugly nature of the dispute on which the slaves' freedom rests – are they the property of the Queen of Spain, the surviving crew of *La Amistad* or the naval officers who "salvaged" them? The equivalent ethical ambiguity in *Schindler's List* had a face, Liam Neeson's. Here, it's the less attractive facade of the US political system and its expediency.
Desperate Measures (18), available to rent from Monday
Imagine *Children's Hospital* meets *The Silence of the Lambs* with a first-rate cast. Andy Garcia is a San Francisco police officer who discovers that homicidal sociopath, Michael Keaton, is the only person able to provide the bone marrow his dying son needs. When Keaton inevitably escapes in the hospital, Garcia has to ensure that Keaton isn't killed in the pursuit, rendering the bone marrow useless. To their eternal shame, Garcia and Brian Cox, as his boss, play this ludicrous mess straight.

George Sluizer was the last man to direct River Phoenix before the actor's untimely death. He was also responsible for the creepiest thriller of the Eighties – the 'disappearance' movie to end them all. Or so you'd think. By Geoffrey Macnab

Dark Blood: the vanishing of a Hollywood star

YOU didn't know that George Sluizer was film-maker, you might mistake him for senior civil servant or a bank manager. He looks as if he has spent most of his life in an office. There is an unflappable quality about him. It somehow doesn't come as a surprise that before he entered the movie business, he worked as a tram conductor and that he once wrote a prize-winning script for a documentary about a way-rolling stock.

"I'm very pragmatic and reasonably of about things," he acknowledges, then asked about the circumstances surrounding his uncompleted 1993 film, *Dark Blood*, "but I must admit River had very strong charisma. He had something special which you do not find with other stars."

Sluizer, the phlegmatic, sixtiesomething stockman, and River Phoenix, the wild young Hollywood icon, make an unlikely combination. Nevertheless, Sluizer relished working with Phoenix. He is still haunted by the circumstances under which *Dark Blood* was abandoned. The 23-year-old died of a drugs overdose 11 days before the film was due to be completed. Sluizer, who was staying in the same L.A. hotel, members vividly his last meeting with a star.

"I saw him at about 9.30pm. I came back to the hotel and I saw him drive away. I said: 'ave a good time and see you at 10am.' The next day, Phoenix and Sluizer were to meet Terry Gilliam (whose work Phoenix hugely admired). "But I was led at 4am by his agent, in tears, who told me River had died. I thought I was kidding. I'm quite stubborn in my own way. I rejected the idea because I absolutely did not expect it."

Sluizer had been shooting with Phoenix at the rest of the cast for eight weeks in a Utah desert. They had only just arrived in Los Angeles. "He called LA the bad, bad town," Sluizer recalls. "When we went there, he said 'we're going back to the bad, bad town.'"

Phoenix's character in *Dark Blood*, a disturbed young man living in the wilds and sitting for the apocalypse, was difficult to act, but Sluizer saw no signs that the role was getting under the actor's skin. As far as he was concerned, Phoenix was a model professional.

"I can't guarantee that he never took anything, but I never noticed. I tell you, if people are really stoned, I'm not totally blind."

the film's co-star, Judy Davis. "Our relationship was not the best you can imagine," Sluizer says, with what sounds like understatement.

Although most of *Dark Blood* was already in the can before Phoenix died, Sluizer realised he would never be able to finish it. Not only were there several crucial scenes that couldn't be shot without the star, if he had attempted to cobble together



a new version of the film, he would have been stepping into a legal minefield. The negative is locked away in a safe somewhere. "Until everything is settled between the lawyers and bankers, nobody will see it." Sluizer originally wanted to use the film as part of a documentary about River: "About his acting, the way he changed from take to take. That, I think, would be of interest to all the acting schools of the world, quite apart from its historic and

archival value. Who knows, maybe some day it will happen."

After the abandonment of *Dark Blood*, Sluizer came back to Europe. In the UK in 1996, he made *Crimetime*, a satire about television and media violence starring Sadie Frost and Stephen Baldwin. Sluizer also recently completed *The Commissioner*, a thriller set in London, Brussels and Cologne in which John Hurt plays an English politician investigating industrial espionage. Sluizer himself describes it as a "Euro-pudding", but insists his use of the term has more to do with the subject matter (skulduggery in the EC) than with any aesthetic shortcomings. He seems glad to be out of Hollywood, where he completed only one film. Ask him why he went there in the first place and he says, without any hint of embarrassment, that he was extremely well paid. He agrees that the version of *The Vanishing* that he made in Hollywood in 1993 was inferior to the original which he himself had directed in Europe back in 1988.

"For me, it was a chance to do a luxury workshop of more or less the same story but with a totally different cast – a star cast opposed to my original anonymous cast. Obviously the first one was more consistent and coherent. There's no doubt about it. But the remake was very watchable."

Dustin Hoffman wanted to be in the movie, but Sluizer turned him down after hearing how petulantly the star had behaved on the set of Stephen Frears' *Accidental Hero*. Instead, Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland took the leading roles. Unfortunately, the Fox executive who originally hired Sluizer had left the studio by the time the film was completed. The new regime allowed the film to be re-edited against the director's will. Even so, Sluizer bears no bitterness against the studio bosses and says he enjoyed working with American technicians.

"When I said I needed new lamps, they'd say: 'Sure'. They didn't say: 'No, it's too expensive', which was all I ever heard in Holland."

Besides, with the money he made in Hollywood he was able to kick-start two new European projects. He now has a pet formula for success. "Make a European film, make the Hollywood remake, then, with the money you get, you'll be able to make another European film."

Sluizer is used to working in adverse conditions. At the start of his directing career, he made *Stamping Ground* (1970), a documentary about a music festival at which Pink Floyd, Santana and The Byrds all appeared. Jan De Bont (later to direct



Above, River Phoenix in 'Dark Blood'. Left, director George Sluizer and the 1993 version of 'The Vanishing' Kobal

MISSING PERSONS

'THE VANISHING' was not the first movie to make folks disappear...

The Lady Vanishes (1938) Margaret Lockwood and Michael Redgrave are the thrown-together couple determined to track down a dear old lady sharing their train. It's propaganda, but so beautifully sophisticated it barely matters.

The Third Man (1949) Carol Reed's classic Vienna-set noir, with gentle Joseph Cotten on the trail of his old friend Harry Lime. The shadows tell you everything – now you see him, now you don't.

The Wicker Man (1973) Repressed, honourable cop Edward Woodward is sent to a sinister Scottish isle

following the reported disappearance of a young girl. As in *The Vanishing*, the hunter becomes the hunted. Truly haunting.

Picnic At Hanging Rock (1975) Three adolescent girls disappear with their teacher on a school outing. Peter Weir's floaty, sun-drenched thriller milks the

sexual tension but never provides answers.

Missing (1981) Costa-Gavras' first American movie. A US writer goes missing in Chile during a coup and his wife and father (Gussy Spacek and Jack Lemmon) discover the limits of truth, justice and the American way.

CHARLOTTE O'SULLIVAN

Speed) was the cameraman. Sluizer talks darkly about interviewing music stars who refused to speak to him unless he was stoned as they were.

That was nothing compared to his experiences as production manager deep in the Amazon jungle on Werner Herzog's *Joke de grandeur, Fitzcarraldo* (1982). "It was very, very difficult. I still think it was the toughest film in film history, tougher than *Apocalypse Now*. We had starvation – and no money," he says. He was re-

sponsible for co-ordinating the extraordinary sequence in which a boat was dragged over a mountain. "There was no question of asking myself if the boat should go up the mountain. That was a given fact. It was only how the bloody hell we got the bloody thing up there."

The work was often soul-destroying. He recalls being made to walk 30 miles through the jungle in search of a particular kind of leaf when there was one that looked well-nigh identical just round the

corner. Sluizer, who has made several films in Brazil, was originally hired for two months. He ended up staying with Herzog for 10.

"The experience was worth it but I wouldn't repeat it. There was madness, arrogance and danger. Werner goes to the absolute limit."

George Sluizer's original version of *The Vanishing* is released on video on 21 September.

"A TRIUMPH... makes you want to get up and dance!"

— Richard Williams, THE GUARDIAN

"Wicked, delicious, funny, immaculately acted"

MAURICE POLLACK, FINANCIAL TIMES

"Deft, bittersweet and very funny. Beckinsale is a revelation"

GRACE ANDERSON, THE SUNDAY TIMES

"Very dry, very funny. His fondest and wittiest work"

DAVID GILBERT, THE INDEPENDENT

Whit Stillman's
The Last Days of DISCO
History is made at night.

CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS WHIT STILLMAN'S 'THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO' (PRODUCED BY KATE BECKINSALE) (WRITTEN BY STEVEN M. KATZ) (DIRECTED BY WHIT STILLMAN) (CASTING BY JENNIFER BECKINSALE) (EDITED BY JEFFREY L. KATZ) (PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JEFFREY L. KATZ) (EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JEFFREY L. KATZ, JEFFREY L. KATZ, JEFFREY L. KATZ) (PRODUCED BY JEFFREY L. KATZ) (WRITTEN BY STEVEN M. KATZ) (DIRECTED BY WHIT STILLMAN) (CASTING BY JENNIFER BECKINSALE) (EDITED BY JEFFREY L. KATZ) (PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JEFFREY L. KATZ) (EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JEFFREY L. KATZ, JEFFREY L. KATZ, JEFFREY L. KATZ) (PRODUCED BY JEFFREY L. KATZ) (WRITTEN BY STEVEN M. KATZ) (DIRECTED BY WHIT STILLMAN) (CASTING BY JENNIFER BECKINSALE) (EDITED BY JEFFREY L. KATZ) (PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JEFFREY L. KATZ) (EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JEFFREY L. KATZ, JEFFREY L. KATZ, JEFFREY L. KATZ) (PRODUCED BY JEFFREY L. KATZ) (WRITTEN BY STEVEN M. KATZ) (DIRECTED BY WHIT STILLMAN) (CASTING BY JENNIFER BECKINSALE) (EDITED BY JEFFREY L. 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Riding into the sunrise

Kurosawa created the popular image of what a Japanese film should look like, yet his best-known works were nipponifications of the Hollywood Western. By Gilbert Adair

AKIRA KUROSAWA, who died last Sunday, was, at least insofar as his reputation in the West is concerned, the most eminent of all Japanese filmmakers. He was arguably, indeed, the most famous of all Japanese artists. His two most renowned titles, *Rashomon* and *The Seven Samurai*, form part of the world's collective heritage of filmic masterpieces and his demise was covered by Britain's newspapers not only on their obituary pages, as one would expect, but, exceptionally for a non-English-language filmmaker, as an item of genuine news, an event of import and interest to more than just the closeted little community of film students. (As ever, though, the British press was outclassed by the cinephile French. Last Monday's edition of the *Parisien* daily *Liberation* devoted no fewer than five pages to his career, garnished with tributes, no less gushing for being brief, from such admirers as Spielberg and even Jacques Chirac. As for Tony Blair, ah well, if it had been one of the *Spice Girls*...)

Yet if you asked one of those film students, whether a scholar, a historian or just a fanatical buff, to name the finest Japanese director, the answer would be unlikely to be Kurosawa. At least two other candidates would take precedence: Kenji Mizoguchi and Yasujiro Ozu. For many cinephiles, Kurosawa's work fatally lacks latency. It harbours no shadow-zones of mystery requiring the intervention of some expert interpreter (the movies that buffs love best are those that have to be deciphered) and, perhaps above all, it belongs too much to the public domain. Put bluntly, he has come to be regarded in informed circles as something of a cliché, a director whose worldwide fame and prestige, however merited, have had the unfortunate consequence of obscuring the immensely rich and multifarious archipelago that is Japanese cinema.

In the arts, and particularly in the cinema, there's nothing unusual about so radical a disavowal of general and specialised taste, but Kurosawa's case is unique. For what it comes down to is that ordinary filmgoers consider him (to the extent that they know his work at all) the most quintessentially "Japanese" of Japanese directors, whereas, for a majority of specialists, he would probably be considered one of the least. Even stranger is the fact that, in a sense, he was both at once.

Take those of his works with which spectators in the West are most familiar, the sequence of Samurai romances: *The Seven Samurai*, most memorably, but also *The Hidden Fortress*, *Sanshiro*, *Yojimbo* and the two sumptuous sagas of his last years, *Kagemusha* and *Ran*. Epic of sweep, picturesque of narrative, imbued with the ostentatiously grandiose values of feudal Japan - courage, self-sacrifice, a stoic submission in the face of death - and stuffed with characters (peasants, warriors, geishas), customs, costumes, exteriors and interiors which could hardly be more alien to contemporary Western experience, they are, in a word, exotic.

Paradoxically, though, it's precisely that exoticism which has made them accessible, more accessible than Mizoguchi's proto-feminist melodramas and Ozu's sublime, static comedy-dramas of domestic minutiae. Or rather, not so paradoxically, for the exotic is just what Westerners find most reassuring when confronted by artworks produced by another, bafflingly different society. Kurosawa's films, in



The cultural mirror effect: 'The Seven Samurai' remade as 'The Magnificent Seven' (above). Below, Kurosawa himself

short, conform uncannily to just about everyone's off-the-top-of-the-head notion of what a Japanese film should look like.

Yet there's more to it than that. As Wittgenstein once whimsically observed, differences resemble each other more than similarities do. Kurosawa admitted on more than one occasion that he had drawn the inspiration for his Samurai films from Hollywood westerns - most notably those of John Ford - as much as from his own country's medieval folklore. And it's certainly true that the Samurai period occupies much the same position in Japanese history as also the same myth-generating function in Japanese culture, as the 19th-century settlement of the Western states in American history and culture. What's remarkable in Kurosawa's case, however, is that the traffic travelled in both directions. *The Seven Samurai*, a film partially modelled on the example of the Hollywood western, was of course subsequently remade as a Hollywood western, John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven*. (So, in fact, was *Rashomon*, by Martin Ritt as *The Outrage*, though the less said about that the better.)

Not is that by any means the end



of the cultural mirror effect. In the Sixties, the Italian cinema, having exhausted the always limited appeal of the "peplum", that pseudo-epic genre that specialised in brawny Hercules and Macbeths ripping obscene biceps beneath dainty mini-logos, imperceptibly started to churn out ersatz Hollywood adventures, the complacently self-styled "spaghetti Westerns". Except that, when one watches these films now - by far the best of them were Sergio Leone's - one is struck by their astonishing resemblance, in both visual style and nar-

rative parameters, not to *The Searchers* or *Rio Bravo* but to *Yojimbo* and *Sanshiro*. The same lonely, tumbleweedy township beset by opposing gangs of marauding bandits, the same taciturn loner who cavalierly plays one side off against the other (in Kurosawa, it's Toshiro Mifune and, in Leone, it's Clint Eastwood), the same masterfully choreographed violence - everything, superficially, may look different, yet everything is, in all its essential tics and tropes, is virtually identical.

Again and again, the potentially alienating effects of what might at a casual glance appear, from a Westerner's point of view, most exotic about Kurosawa's films are neutralised by the sometimes overt, sometimes discreet references to the Western culture that so fascinated their director. Versions of *Macbeth* and *King Lear* set in medieval Japan (respectively *Throne of Blood* and *Ran*)? Why should that be off-putting to British audiences, for example, who have become used to seeing, on the stages of our national theatres, productions of the same plays set in Little Italy, say, or Auschwitz? (These days, a staging of *Macbeth* set in Scotland would be nothing short of revolutionary.) Or a cunning pastiche of an Ed McBain procedural thriller relocated in contemporary Tokyo (*High and Low*)? What could be more postmodern?

It's not surprising, then, that in the closing years of his life, when he started to face horrendous problems setting up his films, Kurosawa was financially and morally aided by such cine-literate Hollywood luminaries as Coppola, Spielberg and George Lucas (in the interstellar jamboree of whose *Star Wars* trilogy can be detected fleeting traces of Samurai mythology). In one of the cinema's more implausible casting coups, Martin Scorsese actually played Van Gogh in a garish episode of *Dreams*, the director's extraordinary, but also extraordinarily uneven, portmanteau fantasy while Richard Gere, an Armani smile in an Armani suit, made a cameo appearance in the work that followed *Dreams* in the canon, *Rhapsody in August*. The circle was complete.

One final point. Just as Kurosawa's own monumental stature has obscured the richness and variety of Japanese cinema, so the richness and variety of his own body of work risks being obscured by the disproportionate attention paid to his historical films. Both now await, and deserve, rediscovery.

What a swell location to sell films in

European arthouse meets Hollywood blockbuster at the Venice Film Festival.

By Geoffrey Macnab

THE VENICE Film Festival is the oldest and most elegant of the three major European film bazaars. Founded in the Mussolini era, it has none of the seaside town tackiness of Cannes in May, and is nowhere near as cold and forbidding as Berlin in February. Everything about the Venice Lido suggests luxury and fading grandeur. The tone is set by the two main festival hotels, the Hotel Des Bains, where Thomas Mann wrote *Death in Venice*, and the Excelsior, where a round of Bellinis (the drink of choice for well-heeled festival-goers) costs about as much as the budget for a small European film.

One of the recurring joys of Venice is the clash between Hollywood and European art-house cinema. The studios see the festival as the ideal autumn launch-pad for their big movies. They're capable of the most ludicrous publicity stunts. In 1995, Denzel Washington popped up out of the Venice lagoon in an Italian Navy submarine to publicise *The Crimson Tide*. This year, the Hollywood invasion was led by Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*.

In the *Private Ryan* press conference, Tom Hanks paid light-hearted tribute to Spielberg, "the great artist and industrialist". Spielberg in turn paid homage to European cinema, talking about Fellini, whom he met when he came to Italy as a 23-year-old with his film *Duel*, and Antonioni. His next film, which has already been cast, will be *Memoirs of a Geisha*, an adaptation of Arthur Golden's novel.

It was striking to compare the rapturous reception given Spielberg, Hanks and co with the lack of interest shown in the Polish *cafeur*, Andrzej Wajda, who had appeared on stage a few minutes before. Ditto Akira Kurosawa, who had the misfortune to pass away on the day Jim Carrey was in town.

Whatever distractions the Hollywood publicity bandwagon provided, it was still possible to watch up to eight new films a day. There were some pleasant surprises. Susanna Styron's *Shadrach*, a nostalgic, depression-era tale adapted from one of William Styron's stories, boasts a funny and warm-hearted performance from the usually irascible Harvey Keitel. John Dahl's *Rounders*, a low-key but cleverly scripted drama about poker, also hit the mark. Matt Damon, the film's lead, disconcerted interviewers by introducing them to his mother. Another young star with a parent in tow was the precocious 15-year-old Lelee Sobieski, who appears in James

Ivory's *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*. Among Sobieski's forthcoming projects is the new Stanley Kubrick effort, *Eyes Wide Shut*. Kubrick has sworn her to secrecy about the yet-to-be-completed film, but she offers an intriguing thumbnail sketch of the reclusive director. "He's not this weird guy. He dresses in the same clothes every day, which is fine because he doesn't smell bad - he probably has duplicates."

Kris Kristofferson, who also appears in *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, wouldn't be drawn on the travails of a fellow Rhodes Scholar. "I inhaled, he didn't," was all he had to say about Clinton.

Amazingly, some journalists booted during the press screening of the one British film in competition this year, Anand Tucker's *Hilary and Jackie*. This hugely moving account of the relationship between the cellist Jacqueline du Pre

(Emily Watson) and her sister Hilary (Rachel Griffiths) shatters for ever the old clichés about British cinema being emotionally repressed. Yves Angelo's austere, beautifully shot *Volere de Vie* was also about the troubled relationship between two sisters (Emmanuelle Béart and Sandrine Bonnaire) while Claude Lelouch's *Hasards ou Coïncidences* deal with the grief and loneliness of a beautiful young dancer who loses her child.

With so many films striking such an introspective, mournful note, Tom Tykwer's wildly energetic *Run Lola Run*, in which a young, shock-haired punk races for a rendezvous she dare not miss, provided a welcome rush of adrenaline. Eric Rohmer's *An Autumn's Tale*, a perfectly constructed comedy with just a hint of melancholy about it, was another antidote to the gloom.

The festival doesn't finish until Sunday. With Pat O'Connor's *Dancing At Lughnasa* (which offers the intriguing pairing of Kathy Burke and Meryl Streep), Emir Kusturica's *White Cat*, *Black Cat* and Warren Beatty's *Buoworth* still to be screened, it is too early to say where the major prizes will go. Regardless of who wins the Golden Lion, though, it is still safe to assume that Hollywood will benefit the most from the fortnight on the Lido. For the Europeans, Venice may be about celebrating cinema as art, but, for the studios, the festival is one big publicity junket: a glittered opportunity to sell their movies in one of the most scenic locations imaginable.



'Hilary and Jackie'

DOUBLE BILL

VENTURA PONS, DIRECTOR OF 'CAresses', ON HIS IDEAL CINEMATIC PAIRING

ROCCO E I SUOI FRATELLI (ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS) DIR. LUCINO VISCONTI (1960) DECONSTRUCTING HARRY DIR. WOODY ALLEN (1997)

THESE TWO films, both of which I admire a lot, show two contrasting views regarding life. And they couldn't be more different. Rocco and his Brothers, the Visconti masterpiece, is a film with a strong political and social compromise, offering a powerful glimpse of a family group that emigrates from its land and is facing an unknown society.

Deconstructing Harry is much more about the individual in a place he is known for ever (but is so unknown, at the same time). Allen is so great with the portrait of the urban man, alone with his problems and relating with others. Nobody has been able to explain it as he does - and every time in a more assured style, by the way.

Both films are masterpieces in their genre and they reflect ideas and face reality that belongs to different worlds, so that's why it should be great fun to see them together. And also is very interesting, as one is a drama and the other one a comedy. I like both genres, and it would be fine to look to them as drama and comedy are



'Deconstructing Harry' and 'Rocco e i suoi fratelli' (Ronald Grant)



both sides of the coin of life. Visconti has been one of the most important European film-makers. Just as Allen is in America. I believe that nowadays in Europe we are the sons of both cultures, as we have grown up in the know-

ledge of both cinemas. The Americans most probably don't have this double fascination with cinematic and social references, but I am not sure. Rocco explains a strong realistic scenario (and also a little bit romantic, in a way), the

problems of a working-class family; a mother with her four sons, arriving in Milan from Calabria, the poor southern Italy. It explores the different ways in which the brothers fight and the ways in which they integrate within the grow-

ing neo-capitalistic society of the Italian Fifties. The film has a brilliant style: the way Visconti introduces those different chapters of each son is so well constructed. Each son is given his own narrative. The dramatic game is powerfully

constructed. And its progressive ideology is quite clear. In this film we meet a mature Visconti, the great director, who uses his aristocratic background, his great sense for drama (and melodrama), his taste for music, paintings, culture - to serve a story with a real social meaning.

The Allen film is the reverse, but very interesting too. He makes a continuous entertainment (such a word for the Americans) of something so frightening as the loneliness and contradictions of modern man in big cities.

Deconstructing Harry is a highly intelligent film. Allen uses a great structure to amuse us with his neurosis, going continuously further and back in the story, breaking the traditional narrative rules. I have always liked people who break rules. And how great it is to follow the way he deconstructs with great virtuosity his (our) relations, the way he (we) behave, his (our) need of affection, communication, love and so on.

INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER RODGER

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FAST TRACK

GRADUATING TO THE WORLD OF WORK

Night classes offer real academic work – and silly ways to spend the evening. By Jenny Madden



Signing up for 'Clown Skills' classes will teach you to 'become aware of your own stupidity', just like a lot of the psycho-babble classes on offer

Classes for the wounded and self-indulgent fools

The new academic year is here again, but wannabe university students aren't the only ones rushing to get places. Further education colleges all over London are currently in the midst of the hectic night-class enrolment period, which will last until term begins on 21 September.

Night classes provide a valuable service. They plug the gap between what you've forgotten or were never taught at school, and what you now need to know in the adult world. With many of the vocational courses already fully enrolled, the popularity of the night class is in no doubt. Whether you need to refresh your rusty O-Level French or learn a new computer package for work, or if maturity has brought a curiosity about a subject you never paid attention to at school, a night class is a way to improve and extend yourself.

However, vocational courses for those who wish to give their careers a shot in the arm, and those which provide a recognised qualification, account for only part of what's on offer to the night class enrollee for the 1998/99 session in Greater London. The non-vocational courses, which range from arts and crafts, covering painting, ceramics and writing, now count among their number an increasing amount of "al-

ternative" courses which offer an insight into the current obsessions of our culture. Still, night classes have always been about more than just straightforward off-the-job learning. In the accommodating world of the evening class, there has always been a place beside the functional for the sublime.

Take the creative writing class. A hugely popular option, creative writing classes offer a refuge for the misunderstood creative genius stifled by a harsh and insensitive world. The would-be writers who attend should benefit from the chance to read their work aloud, and get constructive criticism from the teacher and fellow students. Alas, many who attend are often thwarted in their attempts to improve because of the common presence of a certain type of character. Creative writing classes all too often seem to harbour the kind of writer who, despite flying in the face of the opinion of anyone who has ever come into contact with their work, believe that they possess a creative genius which the rest of the world is too blind to see. How, then, are the opinions of these people, so obviously at odds with the real world, going to help others improve their writing?

After the functional vocational courses, and the long-established arts courses, a fast growing sector of night classes are concerned with

pseudo-psychological "personal development". These courses are non-vocational, concentrating on more ambiguous skills such as communication, understanding and relating. They are increasing in popularity and, despite offering no kind of qualification or final assessment,

To be identified as 'A Wounded Healer' and spend two days in shamanism rites starts to verge on the hippyish fads of Ab Fab's Edina

they are fully booked every year. Once a solely American phenomenon, the "personal development" class is now *de rigueur* in British FE colleges. Like the self-help book, that other great American institution which has found favour this side of the Atlantic, personal development classes offer an array of solutions to problems you never knew you had. Did you, for example, ever find it difficult to "be in a group"? If so, hey presto! The

"Being in a Group" sessions offered by the City Literary Institute, one of the larger FE colleges, located in Covent Garden, promise to teach you precisely "how to be in a group", presumably by getting together with other people each week and sitting in a room.

Other courses include such treats as "The Wounded Healer", where those that have been "emotionally wounded" can turn it to their advantage with the help of a two-day class in which they will "explore themes of the wounded healer through the myth of Chiron and initiation rites of Shamanism".

While leafing through a self-help book in the privacy of your own bedroom may be a comforting and possibly useful diversion, if a bit naïf, to identify yourself as "a wounded healer" and devote two days to indulging in the myth of Chiron and initiation rites of shamanism, in a college in Covent Garden, starts to verge on the kind of self-indulgent hippyish fads favoured by Ab Fab's Edina Monsoon.

But, of course, it's generally accepted that many people go to night classes just for the social life, and that the enrollees on courses such as "The Wounded Healer" are more interested in the company of other human beings than in mythical figures named Chiron. How much self-deception is required to convince

yourself that you'll learn something worthwhile on the "Wounded Healer" class, when what you're really trying to do is to avoid watching *Police, Camera, Action!* over a meal for one?

On scanning many of the non-vocational courses, it appears that all it takes to carve out a career running personal development evening classes is a nice line in psycho-babble. Some tutors would seem better suited to teaching "How to pull a fast one and get 25 people to shell out £50 on a night class, plus the cost of the course text, which happens to be written by you". Though some tutors' entrepreneurial skills may need more honing before they offer any more "Clown Skills" courses, like the one at the City Literary Institute, whose description sells a little too close to the thinly veiled piss-take wind when it promises that "students can expect to learn an awareness of their own stupidity".

Whoa! What a vindictive streak has emerged. Perhaps a course on "Diffusing and Managing my Argumentative Streak" is called for, or possibly the "Anger, Pain and Creativity" class at the May Ward Centre, or even over to the Hounslow Adult Centre for "Choosing to Live Happily" because, at the end of the day, whatever problem or interest you can imagine, there's a night class somewhere about it.

A-Z OF EMPLOYERS JOHN LAING

Age: 150.

History: The company's first headquarters were founded by James Laing in the Cumbrian village of Sebergham, a site that was later taken over by the Salvation Army and is now used as a holiday home.

During the 19th century the company was noted for its visionary schemes; it promoted pension and health provisions across the industry, and grew rapidly in the early part of this century when John Laing took the helm. In the Fifties and Sixties it became almost a national institution, with contracts to build parts of the M1 and reconstruct Coventry Cathedral. Although the company was hit by the recession, more recently it has been leading the way with the Private Finance Initiative; projects include the new Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, the MoD's Joint Service Command and staff college, and an extension to Manchester's Metrolink light railway. Other projects include the Greenwich Millennium Experience, the new Parliamentary buildings and Cardiff's millennium stadium.

Address: Around 120 people are based at the headquarters in Mill Hill, London. Offices around the UK include those in Hemel Hempstead, Birmingham, Newcastle and Manchester. Graduates work on sites all around the UK.

Ambience: "It's a dynamic, go-getting environment," says a spokesman, a comment that is belied by the Corporate Research Foundation, which found the company's employees to be, on the whole, "industrious, family-oriented and non-controversial".

The company's newspaper, *Team Spirit*, has been distributed since the early days; the company's own charitable trust helps with pensioners' heating bills; and the firm is known for its environmentally friendly policies.

Vital statistics: Annual turnover last year exceeded £1.4bn, with pre-tax profits of £32.2m. The group employs more than 6,500 people worldwide.

Lifestyle: Much internal promotion goes on, and secondments abroad have been a key feature for graduate employees. In the

past, graduates have been placed in Europe, the Far East, India and South Africa; there are also opportunities for self-starters to learn foreign languages. Employees who get sick are well looked after, with a permanent health scheme, and, amazingly, the company's thousands of ex-employee pensioners are visited every six months by the company's welfare officers.

Easy to get into? Laing currently recruits 50 to 60 graduates each year – mostly with degrees in civil engineering, building and quantity surveying – and sponsors another 40 or 50 at university; it has particularly strong links with Loughborough, Salford and Ulster. The company's remit includes construction across most industry sectors, including civil engineering, infrastructure operations, technical design and capital investment.

Glittering alumni: Two construction bosses – John Arnitt, now chief executive of Costain, and Oliver Whitehead at Alfred McAlpine – previously headed up John Laing's civil engineering department.

Pay: Those working in the South-east start on £15,500; elsewhere, salaries are lower. There are twice-yearly reviews, and substantial mobility allowances – up to £5,000 a year. Senior staff get free BUPA care, and all employees benefit from a non-contributory pension scheme.

Training: Builders and quantity surveyors are put through a two-year scheme, leading to chartered status; for engineers, it's three years. There's also a learning network, where employees can ring in and order computer training packages.

Facilities: Staff at Mill Hill use the sports complex at nearby Elstree, including cricket, golf, football, bowls and tennis facilities. But, in time-honoured builders' fashion, you have to bring your own sandwiches to work – there are few canteens on sites.

Who's the boss? The group's chairman is Sir Martin Laing, grandson of John Laing, who built up the company in the Twenties and Thirties. His deputy is Robert Wood.



Meet the boss: Sir Martin Laing is descended from the company's founder

Seeking a judgment on the value of work experience

Dear Help Desk

I AM a law graduate who has recently completed the Legal Practice Course and am applying for a training contract for 1999 or 2000. I have gained some practical legal experience during the Summer vacations and would like to know what else I should be doing between finishing the LPC and finding a suitable job, to enhance my prospects of gaining a training contract.

I understand that positions may be available with law firms during this gap, and I would like to know whether, in reality, this is the case. Also, does getting experience in one type of firm such as a legal aid practice as opposed to a commercial firm mean that my options would be more limited when it comes to applying for a training contract? Jonathan White, Cambridge.

Hina Malik, graduate recruitment manager, Stephenson Harwood (a major City law firm) says:

There are still some training contracts available for 1999 but as many law firms, especially in the City, recruit two years in advance, most will be recruiting for September 2000 at the present time. However, some firms will have under-recruited and so it is worth approaching Graduate Recruitment departments directly.

Refer to the Student Edition of the *Chambers Guide to the Legal Profession* for relevant names and addresses. Paralegal work between completing the LPC and finding a training contract can be useful experience to have on your CV and, sometimes, paralegal work can lead to the offer of a training contract.

Before accepting any offer, you should always enquire as to whether

the particular firm has a policy of recruiting paralegals as trainees. If you are interested in applying to City firms, it would be preferable to gain experience of commercial law. However, any kind of experience in the legal field is better than none and will show commitment to a career in the law. Good luck with your search!

Anil Shah, regional controller, HW Daniels Bates Legal recruitment consultants says:

Training contracts are increasingly difficult to obtain, so anything that will enhance the contents of your CV should increase your chances. Gaining experience with a law firm, as it appears you have done, is without

HELP DESK

YOUR CAREER PROBLEMS SOLVED

doubt one of the best ways to build relevant experience, particularly if you are able to work in one of the fields which currently suffer from skills shortages, such as residential conveyancing, tax (both private client and corporate) or personal injury (plaintiff and defendant RTA).

Opportunities do exist with firms for individuals who possess a solid, if basic, level of experience in these areas. Also you will find that having the name of a major law firm on your CV can significantly increase your prospects of obtaining a training contract, especially if you hope to join a top tier firm. In order to get to this point flexibility is important.

Just as you may have to relocate

to get a job with a good firm, you may have to consider doing the same in order to gain relevant experience.

This will also increase your chances of finding an opening with a firm during the gap period. It is important, however, to bear in mind that if you are looking to specialise in, for example, commercial law, you will find that experience in an unconnected area of law will not be of great value. In this case it is better to wait for a relevant opportunity.

With appropriate experience you will find law firms more willing to hear from you and more likely to offer you a training contract. This advice is equally relevant to people who have been unable to gain a training

contract the first time round, but are working as non-qualified fee earners in a legal environment.

James Clayton, trainee solicitor, Olswang says:

Although most law firms recruit their trainees two years in advance, their requirements often change in the interim period, so do not be put off chasing the personnel departments of the firms you are interested in to see if they are recruiting additional trainees for an intake which was previously full.

Otherwise, summer placements or any other form of work experience (even unpaid) are invaluable, since they present an ideal opportunity to get your foot in the door, and instead of having one interview to put your case, you get a window of 3-4 weeks. Obviously, it is preferable to ex-

perience the areas of law which interest you, but there is more to work experience; office life is not something which the LPC prepares you for and any experience of the law in a practical environment is worthwhile. Ultimately there is a large amount of luck involved in finding a training contract (being in the right place at the right time, etc), as well as perseverance.

No one enjoys spending hours slaving over one application after another, but needs must when the devil drives. I was fortunate enough to start a placement at Olswang at a time when the firm was (and indeed still is) enjoying a period of considerable growth, and what started out as a three week summer placement became two months worth of work culminating in a training contract to take back to law school.

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*Source: Financial Times September '97

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Dr Nick Tate,
Chief Executive, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
David Thomas,
Head of Change Leadership, BT

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NEW FILMS

HANDS (AKA PALMS) (PG)

Director: Arun Aristakysian
The director of this harrowing semi-documentary has been compared to Pasolini and Tarkovsky, the press notes assure us, but though this is an imaginatively realised rumination on the workings of the modern world, the picture is deadening in a way that those directors' best work never was. The film is simple and precise in its methods; as images of downtrodden and forgotten citizens—amputees, beggars, the very young, the elderly—are played out before us in a moving collage, a man narrates a message to his unborn child, who may be being aborted even as he speaks.
West End: Renuir

HE GOT GAME (18)

Director: Spike Lee
Starring: Denzel Washington, Ray Allen, Milla Jovovich
The plot of Spike Lee's muddled tale is pure poppycock: Jake Shuttleworth (Denzel Washington) is doing time for the murder of his wife, but is offered a deal that could cut short his sentence. It has come to the attention of the Governor that Jake's son, Jesus (Ray Allen), is the country's hottest new basketball star. If Jake can convince Jesus to sign with the Governor's alma mater, then he can look forward to an early release. Jake agrees, and is dispatched into the outside world on this errand. However, there is a seemingly insurmountable obstacle in Jake's path—his son has vowed never to forgive him for his mother's murder.
West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

THE LAND GIRLS (12)

Director: David Leland
Starring: Catherine McCormack, Rachel Weiss, Anna Friel, Steven Mackintosh
This gentle comedy from David Leland (director of *Wish You Were Here*) leads you into familiar territory, but manages to infuse the experience with warmth and wit. Rachel

Weisz, Anna Friel and Catherine McCormack are the "land girls" called upon in WWII to pick up the discarded ploughs and take the place of the farmers who have departed for war. Nothing surprising—sexual awakening, broad laughs, a smattering of tragedy—but nicely done.
West End: Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (15)

Director: Whit Stillman
Starring: Chloe Sevigny, Kate Beckinsale, Chris Eigeman
In the fictional club at the centre of Whit Stillman's dry and slightly sad comedy, everything sparkles—under the light from the glitterball, the dancers are united in their absent-minded beauty, and pockets of glitter fall from the ceiling even as the club is being busted by cops. But you couldn't accuse the picture of being nostalgic—as with Stillman's previous films (*Metropolitan* and *Barcelona*), actions and emotions unfold with a knowing wink toward the future.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Richmond Picturehouse, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

SPECIES II (18)

Director: Peter Medak
Starring: Michael Madsen, Natasha Henstridge, George Duncanson
Ludicrous science-fiction horror about a strand of deadly alien DNA carried back to Earth in the bodies of astronauts. Corbally dialogue and a healthy abundance of sex and violence make this passable B-movie fun.
West End: Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

Ryan Gilbey

GENERAL RELEASE

ARMAGEDDON (12)

This deeply stupid film purports to be a tender love story, a meaty action adventure and a global disaster movie in which a meteor is on a collision course with Earth. Its jumble of styles will end up pleasing no one. Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE AVENGERS (12)

Ralph Fiennes dons the bowler hat and wields the cane as Steed, Uma Thurman pours herself into a catsuit as Emma Peel, while Sean Connery sashays around in a kilt as Angus De Winter, who plans to take over the world by controlling the weather. Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE (U)

Feature-length exploits for the big, jolly dinosaur whose blend of nursery rhymes, Day-glo colours and moral lessons make him ideal for the more undemanding pre-school viewer, an endurance test for anyone else. Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

LE BOSSU (15)

Sumptuous swashbucklers are fast becoming French cinema's stock-in-trade. This effort doesn't break much new ground, but is acted and shot with such braggadocio that its lack of originality is never a problem. ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Mayfair

EVE'S BAYOU (15)

Rites-of-passage drama set in Louisiana locations which have been devalued by too many Southern Comfort ads. Despite some intuitive observations, this feels for the most part like reheated *Fried Green Tomatoes*. Odeon Mezzanine, Plaza, Virgin Trocadero

GADJO DILO (15)

A young Parisian journeys through rural Romania on a quest for the gypsy singer whose music he discovered through his father. There is a warmth and humour to the storytelling which pushes this film way beyond being mere sentimental travelogue. Renuir

GODZILLA (PG)

The team which cooked up such blockbusters as *StarGate* and *Independence Day* is generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures with a B-movie taste for fun. Unfortunately, on this occasion, their light touch has deserted them. Empire Leicester Square

THE HORSE WHISPERER (PG)

Robert Redford's over-long and deeply indulgent film of Nicholas Evans' novel is a textbook lesson in the narcissistic allure of cinema. Redford plays a Montana farmer who specialises in equine psychology. He agrees to help New York magazine editor Kristin Scott Thomas whose daughter has been traumatised in a riding accident. ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Notting Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels follows the lead of Quentin Tarantino but the film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality. The picture is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy, who comes unstuck in a high-stakes card-game, falls into the former; but Hatchet Harry, to whom he owes \$500,000, is a dangerous old-school pro. ABC Tottenham Court Road, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

LOST IN SPACE (PG)

Yet another cult 1960s television series to get an expensive makeover but the film-makers have remained faithful to the original tone. William Hurt stars as a frosty scientist who journeys with his family into space to save the Earth from environmental destruction. Odeon West End

THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U)

The first full-length product of Warner's new animation division, this Arthurian adventure looks—and courtesy of the inevitable Celine Dion, sounds—more cheery than the average Disney effort. But beneath the surface there's an edge of genuine weirdness that will keep parents entertained, if it doesn't frighten the children out of their wits. Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

METROLAND (18)

Metropolis suburban morality tale in which Christian Bale plays a man festering somewhere in the commuter belt when his oldest friend thinks that he ought to be out having fun. There are some endearing moments but, on the whole, director Philip Saville shows a dispiriting lack of ambition. Virgin Trocadero

MR NICE GUY (15)

This largely disappointing addition to Jackie Chan's oeuvre has its moments—a fight scene on a construction site is a particular delight. But the combination of comedy and adventure doesn't get; it may be the first Chan film that wouldn't even look good if you were plastered. Virgin Trocadero

THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION (15)

Romantic comedy in which Paul Rudd confounds his flatmate Jennifer Aniston's dreams of wedding vows and joint burial plots by being gay. West End: Odeon Mezzanine

THE PROPOSITION (12)

Dismal period drama in which feminist writer Madeleine Stowe and priest Kenneth Branagh become entangled after she discovers her fat-cat husband (William Hurt) is unable to father a child. Salacious tush. ABC Panton Street

THE REAL HOWARD SPITZ (PG)

The *Real Howard Spitz*, a sunny comedy about a children's writer (Kelsey Grammer, aka Frasier) who hates children, is director Vadim Jean's most likeable work. Originality may be thin on the ground but the direction is breezy and Grammer has a lovely, grouchy demeanour. UCI Whiteleys

THE SPANISH PRISONER (PG)

David Mamet's intricate little thriller is a playful exercise in twisting a plot until it looks, there is a scientific detachment about the way he explores every permutation of his Kafkaesque scenario, though the movie is also slyly funny. Barbican Screen, Gade Nothing Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

THE X FILES (15)

David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprise their roles as FBI agents Mulder and Scully and, for their first big-screen outing, get a meaty commurum to chew on involving a shifty secret government and a deadly virus from outer space. Duchovny and Anderson are most engaging through little dialogue and even less facial movement they manage to convey great tenderness. ABC Baker Street, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

ZERO EFFECT (15)

Pleasant thriller starring Bill Pullman as Daryl Zero, the world's greatest private investigator, a drop-out who subsists on tuna fish, Tab and amphetamines, pulling on reserves of wit and ingenuity when the time comes to crack a new case. Ultimately, the film feels a little shallow and self-conscious, but it puts a smile on your face for most of its duration. Warner Village West End

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

Film Ryan Gilbey



I THINK THAT Ed Wood (left) suffers from the same flaws as most Tim Burton films (the nasty and entirely wonderful *Batman Returns* and *Mars Attacks!* excepted, of course). It's rather burdened by his director's affinity with his subject—in this case, the king of trash, B-movie director Edward D Wood Jr. But the film is very sweet-natured, and blessed with some cherishable performances—in the lead role, Johnny Depp; Martin Landau, who deservedly won an Oscar for his tragic portrayal of Bela Lugosi; and Bill Murray in a great cameo as a dumpy transsexual. *NFT South Bank, London SE1 (0171-928 3232) 8.30pm*

The Alan Clarke retrospective at the Edinburgh Film Festival was a terrific success, and now selections from it are appearing on the repertory circuit. Tonight, *The Firm*, his last film, and one of his fiercest, with Gary Oldman as an estate agent whose real love is soccer hooliganism. *ICA Cinematheque, London SW1 (0171-930 3647) 6.30pm, 8.30pm*

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET

(0171-935 9772) @ Baker Street
Psycho 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
The X-Files 2.20pm, 5.30pm, 8.20pm

ABC PANTON STREET

(0171-935 0631) @ Piccadilly Circus
The Big Lebowski 1.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm
Jackie Brown 1.30pm, 4.40pm, 7.45pm
Live Flesh 4.40pm, 6pm, 8.20pm, 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.25pm

ABC PICCADILLY

(0171-935 4671) @ Piccadilly Circus
Lolita 2.05pm, 5.05pm, 8pm
Love And Death On Long Island 1.25pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE

(0171-935 6279) @ Leicester Square/Tottenham Court Road
Hana-Bi 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 8.30pm
The Spanish Prisoner 1.25pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.25pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE

(0171-732 4701) @ Leicester Square/Piccadilly Circus
Le Bossu 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm
The Daytrippers 1.10pm, 3.10pm, 5.10pm, 7.10pm, 9.10pm
Deconstructing Harry 1.10pm, 3.20pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm
La Grande Illusion 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm, 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm, 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

(0171-636 5148) @ Tottenham Court Road
The Horse Whisperer 1.05pm, 4.45pm, 8.20pm
The Last Days Of Disco 1.25pm, 4.10pm, 6.45pm, 9.20pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.50pm, 6.40pm, 9.15pm

BARBICAN SCREEN

(0171-382 7000) @ Moorgate/Barbican
The Horse Whisperer 9.30pm, 8.30pm
The Spanish Prisoner 2.30pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm

CHELSEA CINEMA

(0171-351 3742) @ Sloane Square
The Horse Whisperer 1.05pm, 4.25pm, 7.50pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE

(0171-498 2242) @ Clapham Common
The Horse Whisperer 1.30pm, 5pm, 8.30pm
The Last Days Of Disco 1.15pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9pm
The X-Files 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm, 9.15pm

CURZON MAYFAIR

(0171-389 1720) @ Green Park
Le Bossu 12.15pm, 3pm, 5.30pm

ELPHANT AND CASTLE CORONET

(0171-437 4968) @ Elephant & Castle
Dr Dolittle 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.40pm, 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.40pm, 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.40pm, 1.30pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.40pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE

(0171-437 1234) @ Leicester Square
Godzilla 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm
The X-Files 1.25pm, 3pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm, 1.25pm, 3pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm

GATE NOTTING HILL

(0171-727 4043) @ Notting Hill Gate
The Spanish Prisoner 1.40pm, 4pm, 6.25pm, 8.50pm

HAMMERSMITH VIRGIN

(0870-9070718) @ Ravenscourt Park/Hammersmith
The Horse Whisperer 1.20pm, 4.50pm, 8.15pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.20pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.10pm
Species II 12.30pm, 3.10pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm
The X-Files 12.15pm, 3pm, 6pm, 8.30pm

METRO

(0171-437 0757) @ Piccadilly Circus/Leicester Square
Latin American Film Festival phone for details

CURZON MINIMA

(0171-369 1723) @ Knightsbridge
Hana-Bi 2pm, 4.15pm

NOTTING HILL CORONET

(0171-727 6705) @ Notting Hill Gate
The Horse Whisperer 1.15pm, 4.35pm, 8pm

ODEON CAMDEN TOWN

(0181-315 4229) @ Camden Town
Armageddon 8.15pm
The Daytrippers 12.20pm
The Horse Whisperer 12.40pm, 4.15pm, 7.45pm
The Last Days Of Disco 12.45pm, 3.20pm, 6.05pm, 8.50pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 12.15pm, 2.55pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm
The Spanish Prisoner 12.20pm, 2.50pm, 5.45pm
The X-Files 2.45pm, 5.50pm, 8.45pm

ODEON HAYMARKET

(0181-315 4212) @ Piccadilly Circus
The X-Files 2pm, 5.45pm, 8.35pm

ODEON KENSINGTON

(0181-315 4214) @ High Street Kensington
Armageddon 12.30pm, 3pm, 6pm, 8.10pm
The Horse Whisperer 12.30pm, 3.15pm, 6.15pm, 9.15pm
The Horse Whisperer 12.30pm, 3.15pm, 6.15pm, 9.15pm
The Last Days Of Disco 1.20pm, 4.05pm, 6.50pm, 9.35pm
The Little Mermaid 11.40am, 1.40pm, 4.20pm, 7pm, 9.40pm
The X-Files 12.45pm, 3.40pm, 6.35pm, 9.30pm

ODEON LEICESTER SQUARE

(0181-315 4215) @ Leicester Square
The Horse Whisperer 12.50pm, 4.15pm, 7.50pm

ODEON MARBLE ARCH

(0181-315 4216) @ Marble Arch
Armageddon 2.05pm, 5.25pm, 8.50pm
The Horse Whisperer 1.15pm, 5.05pm, 8.15pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 12.15pm, 3.25pm, 6.10pm, 8.55pm
Species II 1.45pm, 4.55pm, 6.25pm, 8.55pm, 1.25pm, 3.50pm, 6.20pm, 9pm, 11.30am, 1.10pm, 4.40pm, 7.20pm

ODEON MEZZANINE

(0181-315 4215) @ Leicester Square
Eve's Bayou 1.45pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm
The Object Of My Affection 1.35pm, 4.50pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm
Six Days, Seven Nights 1.55pm, 4pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
Titanic 12.05pm, 3.45pm, 7.25pm
The Wedding Singer 6.40pm, 8.50pm

ODEON SWISS COTTAGE

(0181-315 4220) @ Swiss Cottage
Armageddon 2pm, 5pm, 8.40pm
He Got Game 12.15pm, 3pm, 5.45pm, 8.25pm
The Horse Whisperer 1.15pm, 4.05pm, 6.40pm, 9.15pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.45pm
The Spanish Prisoner 1.30pm, 5.05pm, 8.35pm, 11.20am, 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Spanish Prisoner 1.30pm, 5.05pm, 8.35pm, 11.20am, 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm

ODEON WEST END

(0181-315 4221) @ Leicester Square
Lost In Space 12.00pm, 2.50pm, 5.40pm, 8.30pm
The X-Files 12.45pm, 3.30pm, 6.15pm, 9pm

PHOENIX CINEMA

(0181-444 8789) @ East Finchley
The Spanish Prisoner 2pm, 4.20pm, 6.40pm, 9pm

PLAZA

(0171-437 1234) @ Piccadilly Circus
Armageddon 1.30pm, 4.45pm, 8.15pm
Eve's Bayou 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Spanish Prisoner 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 6.20pm, 8.50pm
Titanic 8.35pm
The Wedding Singer 6.50pm
Zero Effect 1.35pm, 4.15pm, 9.30pm

WARNER VILLAGE WEST END

(0171-437 4347) @ Leicester Square
Armageddon 1.10pm, 2.10pm, 5.20pm, 8.30pm
The Avengers 1.15pm, 4.15pm, 7.10pm, 10.10pm
Dr Dolittle 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.05pm
Eve's Bayou 7.30pm
Gang Related 10pm
Godzilla 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.05pm
He Got Game 7.30pm
The Horse Whisperer 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Horse Whisperer 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Last Days Of Disco 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9pm, 11.30am, 1.10pm, 4.40pm, 7.20pm

ACTON

PARK ROYAL WARNER VILLAGE
(0181-696 0066) @ Park Royal
Armageddon 2.20pm, 5.40pm, 8.50pm
The Avengers 5.05pm, 8.20pm
Dr Dolittle 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.05pm
Eve's Bayou 7.30pm
Gang Related 10pm
Godzilla 12.30pm, 2.30pm, 4.50pm, 6.50pm, 9.05pm
He Got Game 7.30pm
The Horse Whisperer 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Horse Whisperer 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.40pm, 9.10pm
The Last Days Of Disco 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9pm, 11.30am, 1.10pm, 4.40pm, 7.20pm

BARBICAN

ODEON (0181-507 8444) @ Barbican
Armageddon 8pm, Dr Dolittle 12.55pm, 2.40pm, 4.25pm, 6.10pm, 8.50pm

Classical Duncan Hadfield

THE WIGMORE HALLS new autumn season starts today in fine style with a visit from the distinguished soprano Edith Mathis. Still in glittering voice, Ms Mathis is one of the finest exponents of the Austro-Germanic lieder repertoire. Joined at the piano by master accompanist Graham Johnson, the pair contribute to the Wigmore's ongoing Schumann Series, with a range of songs by him, as well as by Beethoven and Hugo Wolf. *Wigmore Hall, London W1 (0171-935 2141) 7.30pm*
Featured from the composer Karol Szymanowski receives his final airing of the season via his enchanting cycle *Songs of a Fairytale Princess*, sung by Valérie Anderson. An inviting programme also finds Mark Elder (above) conducting the RBC National Orchestra of Wales in Stravinsky's *Schwarze Pantouque*, Debussy's ballet score, *Jazz*, and Holst's ever-popular *The Planets*. *Royal Albert Hall, London SW7 (0171-589 8212) 7.30pm*



Art Richard Ingleby

THE SCULPTOR Gavin Turk started out by failing his degree at the Royal College with a final show that consisted of a solitary blue plaque on his studio wall stating "Gavin Turk, sculptor, worked here 1989-91". These days such canny conceptualism would probably get him a first, but just seven years ago it was all a bit much for the folk in charge at Kensington Gore. Times have changed, as has Turk's sculpture, and not necessarily for the better, though from lucky you can judge his recent work (above) for yourself. As the exhibition tells him— "Gavin Turk - The Stuff Show" — it shouldn't all be taken too seriously. *The South London Art Gallery, London SE5 (0171-702 6120)*
Meanwhile, up at Saatchi Gallery in St John's Wood, the grand patron of Turk and his pals is proving that his taste extends beyond the Britpics with an exhibition show casing a new batch of 14 Young Americans. *From today, 83a Boundary Road, London NW8 (0171-624 8299)*



EDMONTON

LEE VALLEY UCI 12
(0980-888954) @ International Harp
Armageddon 1.40pm, 3.40pm, 5pm, 6pm, 8.15pm, 10.20pm, 10.05pm
Dr Dolittle 2pm, 3pm, 4.30pm, 5.15pm, 7pm, 7.30pm, 9.30pm
Eve's Bayou 8.35pm
Gang Related 9.40pm
Godzilla 3.40pm, 6.40pm
He Got Game 3.40pm, 5.40pm, 8.50pm
The Horse Whisperer 1pm, 2.50pm, 4.20pm, 6pm, 8pm, 9.10pm
The Horse Whisperer 12.35pm, 4.15pm, 7.45pm
Lock, Stock & Two

THURSDAY RADIO

PICK OF THE DAY

CONSEQUENCES (8pm R4) tonight looks at the Church of England's vote, in 1992, to allow the ordination of women - a decision that nearly created a schism in the church, drove Ann Widdecombe into the arms of Rome, and got the entire nation excited about an institution (the Church) that only a tiny proportion of us attend or care about. Jonathan Freedland looks at the mixture of passions,

prejudices and dogma that went into creating such a controversy. Meanwhile, *Coffee* - a Hellish Brew (9.30am R4), the series for the twitching classes, continues with an exploration of the beverage's medicinal uses - over the years, it has been advertised as a cure for scurvy, gout, dropsy and scrofula, a regulator of the bowels, a nerve tonic and (of course) a stimulant.

ROBERT HANKS



RADIO 4 LW

(984kHz)
9.45 - 10.00 Daily Service.
12.00 - 12.04 News Headlines.
Shipping Forecast. 5.54 - 5.57
Shipping Forecast.

RADIO 5 LIVE

(693, 90.9kHz MW)
6.00 Breakfast.
9.00 Nicky Campbell.
12.00 The Midday News.
1.00 Ruscoe and Co.
4.00 Nationwide.
7.00 News Extra.

7.30 Gower's Cricket Weekly. Crick-
eting chat and the latest news from
around the counties with David Gower
and his guests. Call 0500 909693.
9.00 Inside Edge. Rob Barnett and
the team investigate the issues that
affect the sporting world.

10.00 Late Night Live. With Nick
Robinson. Including the day's sports
round-up at 10.30, a late night news
briefing at 11.00, and at 11.5 The Fi-
nancial World Tonight.
1.00 Up At Night.
5.00 - 6.00 Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM

(100.1-109.9MHz FM)
6.00 Nick Bailey. 6.00 Henry Kelly.
12.00 Requests. 2.00 Concerto.
3.00 Jamie Cullum. 6.30 Newsnight.
7.00 Classics at Seven. 9.00 Con-
certo. 3.00 - 6.00 Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO

(125, 157-158.9kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.30 Jonathan Ross. 9.30 Bobby
Hain. 1.00 Nick Abbot. 4.00 Mark
Forrest FM only James Merritt from
8.45. 7.30 James Merritt. 10.00
Paul Coyle. 1.00 Craig Wallace.
4.30 - 6.30 Jeremy Clark.

WORLD SERVICE

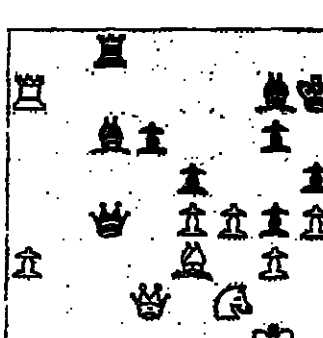
(984kHz LW)
1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Westway.
1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 Newsdesk.
2.30 Composer of the Month. 3.00
Newsday. 3.30 Focus on Faith.
4.00 World News. 4.05 World Busi-
ness Report. 4.35 Sports Roundup.
4.30 - 7.00 The World Today.

TALK RADIO

7.00 Bill Overton and Kirsty Young.
9.00 Scott Chisholm. 11.00 Lor-
raine Kelly. 1.00 Anna Reaburn.
3.00 Tommy Boyd. 5.00 Peter Dee-
ley. 7.00 Nick Abbot. 9.00 James
Whele. 1.00 Ian Collins. 5.00 - 7.00
The Early Show with Bill Overton.

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN



Qxd6 Rb1 + 34 Kh2 Qf1 35 Rxf7 +!
Kxg7 36 Qxc5 + Kgs 37 Qe6 + Kgt
38 Qe7 + Kgt leads only to perpet-
ual check. His last chance to fight
was 33...Qc3, though 34 Qxc5
Qxc5 35 f3 is very good for White.

White: Colin McNab
Black: Jim Plaskett

Grangemouth Round 4 1998

English Opening

1 Nc3 b6 21 Bc2 Qd7
2 g3 Bb7 22 Nb3 Rb1
3 Bg2 Nf6 23 Rb1 f5
4 e4 c5 24 f4 Ng4
5 d3 g6 25 Bxg4 f4g4
6 e4 Bg7 26 d4 cxd4
7 Ne3 0-0 27 Bxd4 e5
8 h3 Ne6 28 Bxd4 e5
9 Bg5 h6 29 Bc3 Qc6
10 Bc3 d6 30 Rb6 Rcs
11 0-0 a6 31 Rxa6 Qc4
12 Qd2 Kh7 32 Ra7 (see
diagram)
13 a3 Nd7 32...Bxc4?
14 Rb1 Nd4 33 Qxd6 Bx7
15 b4 Rb6 34 Qxc5 Rg8
16 bxc5 bxc5 35 Bd4 Qc1 +
17 Nd5 e6 36 Kh2 Qc6
18 Nh4 Be6 37 Rg7 + Kh6
19 b4 Nxf3 + 38 Qg5 mate
20 Bxf3 Ne5

POKER

DAVID SPANIER

THE WORLD Amateur Poker
Championships - a grandiose title
for an event that attracted a dozen
or 15 entrants a day - were held in
London as part of the Mind Sports
Olympiad. This event brings
together players of mind games
such as backgammon, bridge,
chess, crossword puzzles, draughts
and Go. Two floors of the Novotel in
Hammersmith were filled with
competitors, heads down, concen-
trating on a variety of weird-looking
games, played on oddly shaped
boards with pegs or cards or coun-
ters - all very intense and innocent.

The restrictive gaming regu-
lations in this country meant that the
poker had to be played without
money (which you may think is a bit
like going down to the pub to drink
lime juice). Nevertheless, according
to the arbiter Dan Glimme, a good
time was had by all. The style of play
was knock-out tournaments. The
first day was five card draw, then
seven card stud, draw lowball,
omaha and finally Hold'em. "I was
always scared of losing all my
money, so I never dared to play in
a casino," one enthusiast ex-
plained. "Now I think I'll give it a
try." Like many would-be poker
players, he had not realised that in
casino tournaments, the entry fees

are often as low as £10 or £20. So the
risk to a player's small change, let
alone his life's savings, is not quite
like the collapse of the roulette.
In fact one of the lessons of the
Mind Sports Olympiad is that it is
not necessary to play games for
money. What counts is the chal-
enge and the struggle. A lot of
youngsters were learning new
games and enjoying the experience
of competition. The winners were
rewarded with medals. Poker,
admittedly, is different. Money, as
the well-worn phrase has it, is how
you keep score. The games at the
olympiad were really for absolute
beginners. The way they played
omaha was so slow as to make
watching paint dry seem like an
active sport. No criticism intended
- we all have to learn. Still, a less
ambitious title than world amateur
championships might be more
appropriate next time around.

Good news from the Grosvenor
Victoria in Edgware Road, W2: its
re-furnished card room will open on
3 October. There will be four dealer-
dealt and three player-dealt tables.
Weekly tournaments will accom-
modate 50 to 60 players. "The card
room will be smaller but the com-
fort will be higher," says the man-
ager, Bill Stale.

SATELLITE AND CABLE

PICK OF THE DAY

**HOW TO begin describing The
English Patient (8pm Sky
Premier), Anthony Minghella's
marvellously compelling film,
which deservedly garnered nine
Oscars? It is a multi-layered
movie which skilfully transposes
the screen the complexity of the
novel by Michael Ondaatje about
a horribly burnt Count (Ralph
Fiennes, right) recounting to a
nurse (Juliette Binoche) in an
Italian hospital the story of his
adulterous pre-war affair with a
friend's wife (Kristin Scott**

Thomas). Receiving its satellite
premiere tonight, the film
features some wonderfully
luminous performances from
the three leads, but is perhaps
most memorable for John Seale's
shimmering cinematography. The
music of Ondaatje is rather less
refined, but equally powerful.
They are showcased in a special
evening on VH-1 tonight, which
includes: Oasis: Live by the Sea
(10pm) and Greatest Hits of
Oasis (11.30pm).

JAMES RAMPTON



SKY MOVIE MAX

6.00 Marlene (1964) (6006263), 7.45 Trail
of Tears (1965) (631854), 9.45 Sense and
Sensibility (1995) (6775322), 11.30 Loch
Ness (1996) (7070738), 1.30 The Liberty
and the Pursuit of Happiness and the Planet
of the Apes (1978) (2049077), 3.00 Sense
and Sensibility (1995) (6775322), 5.45 Trail
of Tears (1965) (631854), 6.45 Loch Ness
(1996) (7070738), 8.30 60 Minutes (1997)
(677722), 11.00 The Submarine (1996) (677722),
12.55 Cove Girl Island (1965) (6777332),
2.45 Fair Game (1965) (631854), 3.45 -
6.00 Star 80 (1983) (6999327).

SKY PREMIER

6.00 The Ditchdiggers Daughters (1997)
(40107), 6.00 Switching Channels (1998)
(72923), 10.00 Babe (1995) (62223), 12.00
The Ditchdiggers Daughters (1997) (40107),
2.00 Bassmaster II: The Eye of the Storm
(1998) (77861), 4.00 Switching Channels (1998)
(72923), 6.00 Babe (1995) (62223), 8.00 The
English Patient (1996) (631854), See Pick
of the Day 10.40 Phoenix (1997) (6989403),
12.30 Two Days in the Valley (1965) (637633),
2.45 The Hunter (1977) (78707), 3.55 -
6.00 Death Parade (1995) (6594305).

SKY CINEMA

4.00 Funny Face (1957) (9024687), 6.00
Funeral in Berlin (1966) (282590), 8.00
Days of Heaven (1978) (237107), 10.00
Hollywood Hell of Fame (1995) (631854), 10.30
Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961) (300783),
12.30 The French Connection (1971)
(195548), 2.45 The French Connection II
(1975) (692253), 4.00 Build My Gullies
High (1947) (477334), 5.45 Close.

ELIOT

2.00 The A-Team (1983) (900133), 9.00 Real
Stories of the Highway Patrol (1985) (6777332),
9.30 Cop (1976) (237107), 10.00 The Beas-
ment (1980) (400438), 10.30 Real Shoe Daries
(1985) (6777332), 11.00 Films: Adventures of a
Taxi Driver (1976) (400438), 10.00 Beverly
Hills Cop (1986) (709276), 1.30 Real Shoe Da-
ries (1985) (6777332), 2.00 The Beasment
(1980) (400438), 2.30 Cop (1976) (237107),
3.00 Films: (1987) (709276), 5.00 Real
Stories of the Highway Patrol (1985) (6777332),
5.30 - 6.00 Freaky Stories (1982) (400438).

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

4.00 Rex Hunt's Fishing Adventures
(1997) (6777332), 4.30 Top Marques (1996) (6777332),
5.00 Frightline (1997) (6777332), 5.30 Treasure
Hunters (1997) (6777332), 6.00 White Sticks
(1994) (6777332), 6.30 Ultimate Quiz (1997) (6777332),
7.30 Mysterious World (1997) (6777332), 8.00
Science Frontiers (1997) (6777332), 9.00 Super-

ship (1997) (6777332), 10.00 Medical Detectives
(1997) (6777332), 10.30 Medical Detectives
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(1997) (6777332), 12.30 Forensic Detectives
(1997) (6777332), 1.00 Wonders
of Weather (1997) (6777332), 1.30 Wonders
of Weather (1997) (6777332), 2.00 Close.

SKY 1

8.00 Tainted Treasure Alien Fighters
from Beverly Hills (1997), 8.30 Street
Sharks (1997), 9.00 Garfield and Friends
(1997), 9.30 The Simpsons (1997),
10.00 Games World (1997) (237107), 10.30
Games World (1997) (237107), 10.30 Just Kid-
ding (1997) (237107), 11.00 The New Adventures
of Superman (1997) (237107), 11.30 Married
with Children (1997) (237107), 12.30 M*A*S*H
(1997) (237107), 1.00 The Special K Collection
(1997) (237107), 1.30 The Special K Collection
(1997) (237107), 1.55 The Special K Collection
(1997) (237107), 2.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (1997) (237107), 2.30 The
Special K Collection (1997) (237107), 3.00 Jer-
ry Jones (1997) (237107), 3.30 The Special K
Collection (1997) (237107), 4.00 The Oprah Win-
frey Show (1997) (237107), 5.00 Star Trek: Deep
Space Nine (1997) (237107), 6.00 Married with
Children (1997) (237107), 6.30 Dream Team (1997)
(237107), 7.00 The Simpsons (1997), 7.30 Real TV
(1997) (237107), 8.00 America's Dumbest Criminals
(1997) (237107), 8.30 Seinfeld (1997), 9.00 Friends
(1997) (237107), 9.30 Friends (1997) (237107),
10.00 E.R. (1997) (237107), 10.30 E.R. (1997) (237107),
11.00 Dream Team (1997) (237107), 11.30 Star
Trek: Deep Space Nine (1997) (237107), 12.30
Nowhere Man (1997) (237107), 1.30 - 6.00 Long
Live (1997) (237107).

4.00 Tennis (1997) (237107), 10.00 Ford Golf
USA (1997) (237107), 12.00 The Rugby Club
(1997) (237107), 12.30 Tennis (1997) (237107),
1.00 Sports Centre (1997) (237107), 1.30 Close.

SKY SPORTS 3

12.00 World Wrestling Federation Super-
stars (1997) (237107), 1.00 Fan TV Fishing Texas
(1997) (237107), 1.30 Fan TV American Out-
door (1997) (237107), 2.00 Wrestling Classics
(1997) (237107), 2.30 Best of All Time Footbal:
Overseas XI in League Football (1997) (237107),
3.00 Rebel TV (1997) (237107), 4.00 World
Wrestling (1997) (237107), 5.00 Inside the PGA
Tour (1997) (237107), 5.30 The Rugby Club
(1997) (237107), 6.00 Euro Tour Golf (1997) (237107),
6.30 Euro Tour Golf (1997) (237107), 7.00
Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook
(1997) (237107), 1.30 Close.

EUROSPORT

7.30 Sailing Magazine (1997), 8.00 Can-
oeing (1997), 9.00 Judo: Tour of
Spain (1997), 10.00 Xmas Sports
(1997), 11.00 Football: World Cup Leg-
ends (1997), 12.00 Motors Magazine
(1997), 1.30 Mountain Bike (1997), 2.00
Cycling: Tour of Spain (1997), 3.00 Live
(1997), 4.00 Euro Tour Golf (1997), 5.00
Football: World Cup Legends (1997),
(1997), 6.00 Football Magazine (1997),
12.00 - 12.30 Xmas Sports (1997).

UK GOLD

7.00 Crossroads (1973) (237107), 7.30 Neigh-
bours (1980) (237107), 7.55 EastEnders
(1980) (237107), 8.30 The Bill (1987) (237107),
9.00 The Bill (1987) (237107), 9.30 The Bill
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The Independent 10 September 1998

6.30 Children's BBC: *Wiggly Park* (S) (458229), *3,25 Playdays* (P) (S) (784522), *3,25 Rugrats* (S) (784804), *4,20 Mr Wymal* (S) (789448), *4,35 Cartoon Critics* (S) (7) (834985), *5,00 Newsround* (S) (7) (855077), *5,40 Cyber Grove* (P) (S) (7) (858307).

6.35 Neighbourhood: Ben and Lou are made to feel stupid. Really bites, then (S) (7) (868720).

6.40 Newsj Weather (7) (855).

6.50 Regional News: And weather (7) (707).

7.00 Watchdog: Denouncing and aggressive. It may be, but the fact that the programme has the business squawking means that it must be doing something right (S) (7) (2823).

7.30 Keatlands: Louisa drops a bombshell on those closest to her. Connor tackles Ricky's megastalk down the stairs (S) (7) (891).

8.00 ~~HOUSE~~ Street Force: High-speed garden makeover. *Grand Gardening Show of the Day*, below (877).

8.30 The Shop: A new buyer in the furniture department turns out to be a member of the taste police, and breast enhancements costing £250 sell like hotcakes (S) (7) (7879).

8.40 Party Political Broadcast: by the Conservative Party (S) (7) (60056).

9.05 Newsj Regional Newsj Weather (7) (273869).

9.35 ~~ELMS~~ Judge Dredd: (Danny Cannon 1994 US). I actually have a vestible fascination for Sylvester Stallone, but there are limits. They were certainly exceeded by this cartoon-strip fantasy set in a world where the law has got above itself and Sly is the main enforcer. Truly one of the worst films ever made: so bad it's not even funny (S) (7) (838287).

11.05 ~~ELMS~~ Army of One (New Amsterdam 1993 US). Bizarre hunting of Doug Lundgren and George Savelle by murder, but there are hints. They were certainly helped by this cartoon-strip fantasy set in a world where the law has got above itself and Sly is the main enforcer. Truly one of the worst films ever made: so bad it's not even funny (S) (7) (834059).

12.50 John's BBC News 24 (7/187072), to Ben.

GROUND FORCE (from BBC1, 4p/4) Having finished the last run on a staggering minority-channel figure of 6.5 million (and a 5.8 per cent share of viewers), this garden-renewer, shown from the same production stable as *Cracking Rocks*, moves over to BBC1. Crack team Alan Titchmarsh, Charlie Dimmock and Tommy Walsh are charged with roughly the same task as the designers in the Carol Scatliffe show: to transform an unsprinkled patch within a limited time, but here the budget is £1,000. This week, women's international rugby star Debbie Francis and her husband have a picnic deck and planting

Channel 5

6.00 S News and Sport (S) (86023942, 1200 WideWorld (S) (7) (70833018), 8:00 Millennium (S) (61231312), 7:25 What a Mess (87063459), 8:30 Handicapped (S) (68472525), 8:30 Dapplehorn Farm (S) (85551519), 9:00 Fame and Fortune (S) (67524250), 9:25 Russell Grant's Pickstars (88885534), 9:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (S) (7) (88885534), 10:30 Sunset Beach (S) (7) (4787687), 10:55 Liveat (26802221), 12:00 5 News at Noon (S) (8507147), 12:30 Family Affairs (S) (7) (2585891), 1:00 The Bold and the Beautiful (S) (7) (2585891), 1:30 The 90's (S) (6073231), 2:30 The 90's (S) (2585891), 2:50 Open House with Stone Humphred (S) (8307128).

3.30 REIT Gain for a Coward (Arlene Blaherman, 1957 US). Muddled mixture of trite/silly teen movie and dog-farm melodrama. "Red Machinery" runs the family ranch and ignores the way the youngers brothers get into trouble in town. (25030229).

5.50 The Oprah Winfrey Show. Auditory in the workplace. (8270132).

6.30 Family Affairs. Angie receives an offer from the local newspaper. Pete sacks Jack and Jack makes a discovery about Pete's business methods (S) (T) (421565).

Zoo 5 News. Including First on Five. With Kirsty Young (S) (T) (7878887).

7.30 Where the Bleat Roars. Looking at the cougar, or mountain lion – America's indigenous big cat which kills its young in an increasingly hostile environment (5) (7) (426769).

9.00 **FEEL A Murderous Affair** (Merlin Davidson 1992) US: The story of dermatologist of one of America's more celebrated murders of recent years, when teacher Carolyn Warmus murdered the wife of her adulterous lover. Shares the under-fused Virginia Madsen (7)

1.30 Hotline (438325) **12.05 Live and Dangerous** (S) (585618) **12.45 Live and Dangerous Continued** (S) (587330) **4.40 Phonein: Cal Block H** (438103) **5.30 100 Per Cent** (S) (428412), To Barn.

TELEVISION CULTURE BY SERENA MACKEY

FILM OF THE DAY

UNTAMED HEART (9pm Cn) Christian Slater (*1776*) is one of those actors who has, if anything, been hampered by his stunning good looks. While true-heart-throb status can bring wealth and any numbers of girls to accompany you to public ceremonies, it also tends to overshadow any potential talent lurking beneath the shiny skin. But Slater is good — good enough to carry this three-hanky weeper and turn it into something a little bigger than the sum of its parts. He plays a guy's history with a serious heart condition who admits emotionally damaged waitress Marissa Tomei from afar.

**TELEVISION GUIDE BY SERENA MACKESY**